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AUTHOR STUDIES:
CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH THE WORLD OF BOOKS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

By
Kelly Sue Brown
June 1995


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Approved by:



Mr. Joseph W. Gray, First Reader

May 31, 1995
Date



Dr. T. Patrick Mullen, Second Reader

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ABSTRACT

With the advancements of modern technology, the school systems are finding themselves competing with television, video games, computers, etc., for the attention of children. When given choices, children seem to be choosing to read less and are growing into adults who often choose not to read. Because many are not taking the time to read, they are missing out on the pleasures and adventures that can be found in books.

Many children choose not to read because they have not found pleasure in books. In response to this problem, educators are beginning to look at alternative ways to entice children into the world of books. One popular strategy has been the out growth of Literature Based Education. Literature Based Education is reading instruction using literature texts, without controlled vocabulary. Teaching children about the people who write their books is a strategy that can effectively compliment the use of literature in the classroom.

With the extended use of literature in the classroom, the need for children to learn about the authors is becoming more apparent. Many teachers are realizing this need, however, few know where to begin to find the necessary resources. This project has been created to help teachers develop and begin to use author studies in the

classroom. An author study is a study of the life and profession of an author or illustrator. It is designed to introduce children to the people who write their books. As the children learn more about the authors, they begin to make connections between the authors and their works. This should encourage the students to explore literature and help develop positive role models for them to follow. It is hoped that this project will help teachers begin a successful search and use of author centered information.

This project is a resource guide to help teachers locate and find information about authors. The project includes information and ideas on 1) how and where to get started, 2) creating an author study, 3) choosing an author, 4) gathering resources, 5) developing the classroom environment, and 6) extended activities. Included are sample author studies on selected picture book authors. These author studies include biographical information about the author, summaries, annotated information about selected works, and a selected list of other works by the author.

Through author studies, children can gain a new awareness and appreciation for literature. They will often be encouraged to explore other titles by the author and will begin to read his/her work with a new appreciation and interest, and as a result, gain a new love and respect for reading and the reading/writing process.

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The lack of interest in reading and writing is a growing problem in America today. Society is producing many non-readers. This is not to say that they can't read, most of them can. The problem is that our reading population is choosing not to read. Many readers read only what they have to. They usually read just enough to get them out of high school, then they seldom pick up a book or read anything for pleasure again. We are creating a population of school time readers, not life time readers. Since the late 1960's, there has been a general and dramatic decline in the number of books read by children. The number of books read by individual students seems to be decreasing year by year (Trelease, 1989).

Jim Trelease, an author, illustrator, and lecturer, noticed changes in children's reading habits during his hundreds of visits to classrooms between 1968 and 1982. By 1979, the decline was so sharp that when he asked a classroom of students what they had read lately, they were only able to name their classroom text books. This became a common response to the question (Trelease, 1989). The patterns and problems of declining literacy are still evident.

Today, American education is undergoing change. In 1983, the U.S. Department of Education issued a report proclaiming America to

be a "Nation at Risk". Although the drop out rate had greatly improved from the 1940's to the 1980's, Trelease (1993) found that "America appeared to have created successive generations who read only for a diploma, not for pleasure" (p. xi). Hundreds of additional reports followed, touching all areas and levels of our educational system.

Teachers today are in competition with the technical revolution and they are losing. Television has become America's babysitter and is being watched far too much. Children are spending too much time idly watching television instead of exploring the world around them through books and creative play (Trelease, 1989). According to Trelease (1989), "Both children and adults average nearly four hours a day passively letting someone else do all the thinking, speaking, imagining, and exploring. The result has been an unprecedented negative impact on American reading and thinking habits" (p. 118).

In the past 15 years, there has been a tremendous growth in the video game and video cassette industry. Cable television is in practically every home. Our society offers too many distractions that compete with reading and often establish negative role models. Too many people in our society either can't read, won't read, or hate to read. Our society is going to suffer as a result.

Trelease (1989), believes that "It will suffer in the choices those children make in the voting booth, how they choose to spend their time and money; how they raise their children; what they adopt as a value system; and whom they emulate" (p. xxi).

Since technological improvements are here to stay, teachers need to find new methods of selling the pleasures of reading. School curriculums have already taken the first step by trying to change their educational focus. However, most of the effective changes are going to depend upon the teachers. It is going to be up to them to develop programs that encourage children to read and to want to read.

Teachers can make changes in reading statistics by sharing and cultivating a love of literature. One way to experience literature is through an author study. An author study is a method of introducing children to the people who write and illustrate their books. Through author studies, children can learn about the author/illustrator's personal and professional experiences. Author studies allow teachers to invite children to understand and explore the human side of an author and the authoring process.

Sid Fleischman (1987), stated that to children, authors seem to be as "mysterious as phantoms and are just as invisible" (p. 4). Fleischman often receives letters through his publisher asking how

long he has been dead. It is a fairly common myth or theory held among kids that all authors must be dead. Children know very little about the people that write their books. These books are written by people, with interesting and colorful lives, not machines. They are created by men and women with fascinating and personal stories about how their particular books were created (Trelease, 1993).

Children are interested in writers as people. They are interested in their writing and non-writing activities. Authors have a certain mystique about them. By sharing author profiles and personal interviews, some of the mystery is lifted and children are able to see the authors as people who have succeeded in developing a good idea into a story. Through author interviews, children can learn some of the ways the author/illustrator gathers ideas and molds them into a workable story. Children are fascinated to learn where an author's ideas come from and the things done to manipulate these ideas into a workable and believable story. They can make better connections with authors and their works by learning more about them and the histories of their books.

Author studies can benefit readers at all grade levels and reading abilities. The studies satisfy some of the mysteries that surround authors and develop a strong interest in the authors' other works. Children are fascinated with the stories behind the stories.

When students learn trivia about the authors, they begin to develop a closer connection to them, and begin to acknowledge the author as a new friend and the authors' works become more important to them.

Through the use of author studies, teachers can explore a different approach to developing a child's curiosity toward reading. Authors can become positive role models for reading and writing. As teachers share interesting information about the authors, children can more easily make connections with the author's work and their own writing progress. Children are fascinated to see the connections that the books make with the authors lives. With these connections, the books begin to come alive with meaning and the children often search after their works.

This project addresses the need of bringing authors' experiences and influences into the classroom by creating a resource book to help teachers use author studies to strengthen and facilitate their reading and writing programs. This project centralizes on popular picture book authors. It includes biographical sketches of selected authors and interesting information to help students make better connections between the authors and their works. There are sections to help teachers begin looking for information and materials on authors, so they can personalize and develop their own working authors' files. This information can be adapted to other

authors of picture and chapter books and can be an asset in developing future author studies. Throughout this project, the word "author" and "author study" will be used often. When utilized, these terms will be synonymous and denote both the authors and illustrators of children literature.

Theoretical Foundations

In characterizing the process of reading and its instruction, three models of reading are used: Decoding, Skills, and Whole Language. These models, or theories of language comprehension and reading are beliefs that teachers and readers hold about the reading process.

The decoding model is based on an emphasis upon phonics, looking at individual letters that translate into individual units of sound. Decoding is a process of going from the smallest parts of a word (the letter sound) and building to the larger parts (the word and meaning). In this model, the students are the passive receivers of the information. The teacher directs all the information to the children who are then expected to absorb that knowledge. There is little value given to what the child can add to this process.

Students are taught the symbol/sound relationship between words. Phonics rules are taught in isolation of the actual reading process. These rules are then used to decode words and develop meaning. The rules must be memorized and then applied to the reading process. Sound and oral language is of first importance, written language is secondary.

The Skills model is characterized by the basal reading approach. This model is based on the development of words and the

stringing together of these words, ideas, and concepts. Sight words, vocabulary, grammar, basic drills and skills, and controlled comprehension are the focal points of this model. Teachers depend on predetermined and pre-developed programs to assure that skills are taught and learned at appropriate times. Basal readers control the reading levels and tell the teacher and learner what is important to be taught. The vocabulary is controlled to fit the lessons and the readers ability. Workbooks, skill sheets, and controlled basal readers are depended on as necessary materials. In this model, the learner becomes a more active participant in the learning process, than in the skills model. Students are taught skills through directed teaching, however, they are allowed more freedom to share their ideas, within the confines of the story.

The Whole Language model is centered on meaning. In this model, the learner and the teacher are both active contributors to the learning process. The learner is the central focus of this model and the teachers facilitate the learning process. Real literature texts are used, without controlled vocabulary or skills. The key is that this literature must make sense to the reader. Children are encouraged to take risks and explore beyond the text. The learners life experiences, thoughts, ideas, and feelings are all important ingredients to the learning process. The reader's goal is to make

sense of the reading process and develop meaning from the written texts. In this model, all language strategies are used (syntax, grapheme/phoneme, context, etc.), however, they are used in developing and supporting the meaning of the text.

Although these are the basic models of reading, many teachers often find themselves in the middle of these models. With the new curriculum changes, many teachers are caught in the middle of the Skills and Whole Language models. These are often referred to as Transitional teachers.

Basal readers have been a part of our educational system for many years. Many teachers were not only taught to teach within this model, it was also the model that they themselves used as they were learning to read. It is the only way of teaching reading that they are truly comfortable with. While many teachers' thoughts and beliefs may be changing with the influences of the new teaching methods and accepted curriculum, many are still hesitant and uncomfortable giving up the control that the skills and decoding models offer them. Many teachers find that it is easier to change their theoretical position, than it is to change their practices.

It is important for teachers and administrators to understand that the change from a Skills model to a Whole Language one, will take time and commitment. Whole Language will not just happen.

Routman (1991) has found,

Transition to whole language is a very slow process. Most teachers seem to need to hang on to their basals for a while as they gradually move toward a literature and meaning-centered approach. We need to be supportive, accepting, and encouraging of all teachers who are choosing and attempting to move toward whole language. We need to remember that becoming a whole language teacher-learner is a humbling experience; the process is on going, probably for life (p. 26-27).

It takes a lot of time and risk taking on the part of the teacher to become comfortable with Whole Language. Teachers need to have time to read and absorb information from professional journals and texts. They need time to take the risks and try some of it's practices, one at a time, until they gradually become more comfortable with it's processes.

Author studies work comfortably in the Whole Language model, however, they can also be used in a skills based curriculum.

Transitional teachers will find them very helpful in making a smoother transition into whole language beliefs. As students learn about the lives of the authors, and how authors lives have touched their literature, children will be able to make more connections to the literature. Meaning and schema (the development of background knowledge), are created as children learn about the authors' experiences and inspirations. The author's background information allows children to develop a personal bond with the writer and the

story. Instead of reading a story, they are reading the story of a friend.

Author studies serve as a natural bridge into literature. It is a comfortable way to introduce children to different varieties of literary texts. They help teachers ease into trade books that do not provide them with a step by step teacher's guide on how and what to teach. During authors studies, teachers are usually in control of much of the information given, but in time, more and more of the responsibility can be given to the students. The teachers can progress at their own speed. As they gain more trust in their abilities, they will begin to give up some of the control. This takes time and most teachers find that they are constantly battling this idea of control.

Since author studies are highly motivating for both the students and the teacher, they can be a positive language experience for all involved. They are a means for developing better understanding of a story. By learning about the authors, teachers provide many positive role models for reading and writing. Authors encourage children to want to read and demonstrate how students too, can be authors.

Transitional teachers and teachers already successfully working within a whole language model will find author studies to

be beneficial and supportive of their curriculum. The studies can be developed and manipulated to best fit the teacher's theoretical model.

Literature Review

Most children begin kindergarten with an eager and enthusiastic attitude toward reading. Teachers start their school year with much the same attitude. The teachers are eager to succeed in sharing the pleasures of reading with their students. In 1991, the National Assessment of Educational Progress developed and published our nation's "Reading Report Card." This report stated that about 45% of our nation's fourth-grade students read for pleasure on a daily basis. However, only about 24% of the nation's twelfth grade students read anything at all (books, newspapers, magazines, etc.) for daily pleasure reading. According to Trelease (1993) "Somewhere between kindergarten and twelfth grade we are losing 75% of our potential readers, listeners, and thinkers" (p. xii).

Trelease (1989) has found that recent tests have shown that Americans are not a nation of illiterates (unable to read on the fourth grade level). The average American reads simple sentences and simple paragraphs, but is that enough in a world that does not make simple demands on our minds. In the twenty-one to twenty-five-year-old category, 95% of America's adults can use print effectively in routine tasks (one paragraph of simple sentences). However, our world is

growing increasingly more and more complex. America's functional literacy level is continually increasing. According to Fiske (Atwell,1987), "Up through World War II, newspapers were written at about the sixth grade level. Now wire service articles come out at the eleventh grade level, and even sports pages are around ninth or tenth" (p. 153). Nationally, 70% of job related reading material is now written at the ninth grade reading level. Vocational jobs, in which even high school dropouts could once excel, are now becoming more technical. Jobs, like automobile repair and plumbing, are requiring more reading, technical training, and many even require some college training (Trelease, 1989).

We live in a society that is dependent upon print to pass information from generation to generation. Our children are learning how to read, but they are choosing not to read. Trelease (1989) found that "American children and young adults . . . do minimal reading. They don't know very much about yesterday and today unless they've seen it on television" (p. 6).

In reviewing the literature concerning the decline in children reading for pleasure, there seems to be several factors to consider: 1) Developing the desire to read, 2) Curriculum development: traditional and whole language, 3) Time for reading, and 4)

Literature programs enhanced through author studies. There seem to be three major contributions authors/illustrators can make to motivate children to read for pleasure although there is little evidence of documented research at this point. There is value in children learning about authors: The value of author studies can be seen as children and teachers experience 1) Authors as real people, 2) Influence of authors on children, and 3) Writer/ Illustrator's style: a model and motivator for readers.

Developing the Desire to Read

Many reading programs concentrate extensively on reading instruction. While our children may be able to read, many have not developed the desire to want to read. In the process, we are developing school time readers not life time readers. Reading is a skill that is refined with use; it is important that children develop the desire to read on their own. Helping children develop a love and desire for reading is more important than the individual reading skills they will learn. (Trelease, 1989).

To teach our children to find joy in literature, they must have that joy demonstrated by positive role models. Children become readers when they see and hear people they know, enjoy reading. Reading role models help children taste the magic of stories and open up the world of books to them, even before they know how to

read (Trelease, 1989). When teachers and parents demonstrate the joy that comes from reading, children will begin to find their own joy in it (Routman, 1991). According to Smith (1985), "Children will fail to learn to read who do not want to read, who cannot make sense of it, or who find the price too high. They will fail if they get the wrong idea of what reading is" (p. 9). Children need to be shown through modeling that reading can bring joy and does not have to be difficult. Routman (1991) believes that "Unless we take personal and sincere interest in what children are reading and display ourselves as joyful and excited about reading, many children will not actively participate" (p. 44).

Frank Smith (Routman, 1991) has said that it is the educators responsibility "to make school so interesting that students will want to learn. The only way students will choose to read and write beyond the school setting is if they view reading and writing as enjoyable and purposeful" (p. 16). To help children learn to read, reading must be made fun and easy. It becomes easier when it is meaningful and has a purpose. Children need to have frequent, enjoyable experiences with reading to encourage productive reading habits (Smith, 1985).

Reading is a skill that must be developed and practiced. The more you practice (reading), the better you get at it; and the better

you get at it, the more you like it; and the more you like it, the more you do it But the practice comes first, and that won't occur without desire-which must be planted by parents and teachers who work at it (Trelease, 1989).

To begin to instill the desire to read in children, we need to do like McDonald's does, we need to advertise. Advertisements influence us every day. McDonald's has gained it's notoriety and popularity through advertising. They remind us over and over, week after week, about the pleasures that can come from their products. They make us feel that we can't live without it. By constantly being reminded of the enjoyment a product will bring to consumers, advertisements instill a desire for the product. To develop a desire for reading, Trelease (1989) believes "reading aloud is the best advertisement because it works. It allows a child to sample the delights of reading and conditions him to believe that reading is a pleasurable experience, not a painful or boring one" (p. 9).

According to Routman (1991), "Reading aloud is seen as the single most influential factor in young children's success in learning to read. Additionally, reading aloud improves listening skills and builds vocabulary, aids reading comprehension, and has a positive impact on students attitudes toward reading" (p. 32). After extensive research on America's reading and it's practices,

"Becoming a Nation of Readers" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) stated that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading, is reading aloud to children" (p. 23). Reading aloud promotes pleasure and enjoyment and should be used in all the grade levels. It helps to bring joy into the school experience. Peterson & Eeds (1990) found that "The enjoyment of a good story, well read, is universal. When teachers share a story by reading it aloud, children are invited to visit imaginary worlds created through words" (p. 9). These authors also stated that when children are read to,

they are invited to enter into lives, times, and places far removed from daily living. In their imaginations, children can explore the world and the meaning of life by becoming one with characters who search for personal identity, cope with adversity, experience love, and seek acceptance. They are given the opportunity to go after adventure, to struggle for justice, to feel part of others (p. 9).

Curriculum Development: Traditional and Whole Language

In recent years, America's reading curriculum has undergone many changes. In the wake of these changes, basal readers have come under attack by reform groups and their new philosophies. As whole language became the educational buzz word, many school districts began to equate whole language with giving up the basal. Whole language is a theoretical model and the basal is not necessarily its enemy, but simply a resource that can be used by teachers who

possess any theoretical stance. The quality of literature and materials used are important for excellent instruction, however, these materials are only as strong as the teacher's theory of language learning. The effectiveness of any material is determined by the way the teacher blends theories and practices together (Routman, 1991).

Traditional teachers consider reading to be a subject to be taught separate from language arts. Children learn to read by mastering a series of skills, to be taught in small teachable units (Zarrillo, 1989). In the traditional (skills) theoretical model, Goodlad (1984) believes that "a substantial amount of student time in the early school years is spent in writing. But much of this, as we know from other studies, is answering questions in workbooks, filling in blank spaces in short narratives, and so on" (p. 106).

Children are learning to read within the skills model, however, Trelease (1989) has found that the "curriculum consisting largely of programmed drill and skill has produced self-defeating results: students who know how to read but choose not to read" (p. 6). Reading is more than simply sounding out words and filling in the blanks on a workbook page. These processes of reading instruction can help children learn how to read, but it won't teach them to become readers (Peterson & Eeds, 1990). With all these workbook

pages and the academic jargon, we are forgetting that the real purpose of literature is to help provide meaning to our lives. How can children learn to fall in love with reading if we make reading lifeless and boring with the over use of drill and skill (Trelease, 1989).

According to Atwell (1987), teachers enter the classrooms "determined to create readers, to do the very best we can at what we know as teachers" (p.153). However, teachers need to be careful that they are not sending children the wrong messages about reading through the way they teach. Nancie Atwell (1987) has developed a list of twenty-one inadvertent messages that teachers may put across to their students. She believes even the most conscientious version of the traditional approach to teaching convey these messages. What are these messages that we send to the kids?

Twenty-one things teachers demonstrate about reading:

- Reading is difficult, serious business.
- Literature is even more difficult and serious.
- Reading is a performance for an audience of one: the teacher.
- There is one interpretation of a text: the teacher's.
- "Errors" in comprehension or interpretation will not be tolerated.
- Student readers aren't smart or trustworthy enough to choose their own text.
- Reading requires memorization and mastery of information, terms, conventions, and theories.
- Reading is always followed by a test (and writing mostly serves to test - book reports, critical papers, essays, and

multiple choice/fill-in-the-blank/short answer variations).

- Reading somehow involves drawing lines, filling in blanks, and circling.

- Readers break whole texts into separate pieces to be read and dissected one fragment at a time.

- It's wrong to become so interested in a text that you read more than the fragment the teacher assigned.

- Reading is a solitary activity you perform as a member of a group.

- Readers in a group may not collaborate; this is cheating.

- Rereading a book is also cheating; so are skimming, skipping, and looking ahead.

- It's immoral to abandon a book you're not enjoying.

- You learn about literature by listening to teachers talk about it.

- Teachers are often bored by the literature they want you to read.

- Reading is a waste of English class time.

- There's another kind of reading, a fun, satisfying kind you can do on your free time or outside of school.

- You can fail English yet still succeed at and love this other kind of reading (p. 152-153).

Whole language is another philosophical stance toward reading held by many teachers. Teachers in this theoretical model teach reading as a process that develops through use; children learn to read through reading. In this model, language arts is integrated throughout the curriculum. Whole language will not just happen by changing reading programs, it develops slowly over time. Routman stated, "I believe we teachers need time for reflective observation of ourselves and our students and for understanding what whole language is all about" (p. 20).

Routman (1991) stated, "Having milked the basal for skills for many years and having been conditioned to listen for right answers, I have found it difficult to use the literature just for pleasure and appreciation and to make connections with our lives" (p. 23). To teach children to appreciate literature, they must be allowed to make their own choice in the literature they will read. By allowing them to take ownership over their reading process, students will become more fluent readers and develop their reading rate and comprehension (Atwell, 1987).

According to Routman (1991), "The goal of education needs to be independence. . . . Independence means that learners are able to examine and monitor their own behaviors in the learning process. After awhile they begin to take pride in their new-found independence" (p. 17). By allowing students the ability to make reading choices, the classroom climate becomes one of trust. The teacher becomes the facilitator in guiding students in their reading choices by helping them find books at comfortable reading levels. Teachers need to encourage students to choose a variety of quality literature and work within different genres. However, students also need time when they can choose high interest materials for light, enjoyable reading. Most important, children need to find pleasure from reading so that they choose to read on their own. (Routman,

1991).

Trelease (1989) once asked, "Since we know advertising works, how does this sound as a reading promotion: 'Boys and girls, open your books to page fifty-two and answer questions one through twenty.' Not exactly a turn on is it?" (p. 9). When we advertise reading, we want to sell children on the exciting points of reading. The drill and skill of workbooks will not do it. Children are turned on to reading when they read and share real stories. They need to be able to make connections with the lives of the characters and simply lose themselves in the storyline. To make life time readers, we need to sell them on the pleasures of the story and not the repetitious, non-reading activities of the workbooks.

Time For Reading

Reading is a skill that must be used in order to get better at it. The less one reads, the more difficult it becomes and today's students are not reading very much (Trelease, 1989). In order to become readers and writers, children must be given the time to develop their reading skills. They must be given time to develop good reading habits, think about their reading and written works, and share their experiences with others. By allowing children time to read, Peterson & Eeds (1990) believe the children can "become one with the character, to be embedded in the action of the story, to live

intensely within the imaginary world created by the author" (p.12).

The constant constraints we have on our time and our unwillingness to give up that important directed teaching time to non-directed silent reading time, has made it difficult for children to develop good habits that lead to a desire to read more. In Trelease's (1989) research, he found

Two comprehensive investigations of how 158 capable fifth-grade students spend their after-school time showed that 90% of those students devoted only 1% of their free time to reading books and 30% to watching television. Indeed, 50% read for an average of four minutes or less a day, 30% read two minutes a day and 10% read nothing at all. (p. 140-141).

These facts did not seem to bother many parents because they felt that their children were doing enough reading while they were in school. This could be a dangerous assumption on the part of the parents. In a comprehensive, seven year study of America's schools, John Goodlad (1984) observed the following:

Reading occupied about 6% of class time at the elementary level and then dropped off at 3% and 2% for junior and senior high, respectively. If our young people are not reading in school, where are they reading, and how much? (p. 107).

Any society that offers either so many distractions or negative role models that two out of three children can't read, won't read, or hate to read is going to suffer the results (Trelease,

1989). In the classroom, teachers need to set aside more time for reading. They need to take on the responsibility of reading to their children and allow time for the children to read on their own. For many children, this may be the only place that they observe a positive reading role model. Routman (1991) believes that school may also be "the only place where quiet reading time and the possibility of developing the reading habit is conceivable. Outside of school, video games, video cassette recorders, movies, music, telephone calls and television often preempt what could be time for reading" (p. 42).

In the past, teachers have often felt guilty when they allowed their children time to read in class. With so much to accomplish and so little time to do it in, teachers were concerned about using class time to allow children the freedom to independently choose literature and simply read (Routman, 1991). Peterson and Eeds (1990) believe that "Children need time to read in peace, to 'just read,' without worrying about having to do things afterward" (p. 11). Making children do book reports or answer questions after all reading can develop a dislike for reading. Reading is a continuous process of development and will become better with continuous practice (Peterson & Eeds, 1990). Through daily experience with independent reading, children can develop reading habits and get

hooked on books (Routman, 1991).

Teachers need to recognize that children bring a sense of story to the reading process. By allowing children the time to read and share their reading experiences, we give children the opportunities to truly become a part of the reading process.

Peterson & Eeds (1990) believe this allows them, "to become true readers, people who love literature" (p. 12).

After reading a piece, children need time to give thought to and share what they are currently reading or have read. Good writers will leave gaps in the story for the reader to fill in. They leave the reader with things to think about and allow them to build their own conclusions. Peterson & Eeds (1990) stated that "In intensive reading, we give conscious attention to what is written and not written. We make deliberate inquiries into what the story is about. We examine and weigh possible interpretations" (p. 13). When readers have read the same text, they can help each other better understand the text by sharing their views. According to Atwell (1987), "Opportunities to respond, to engage in literary talk with the teacher [and other readers], are crucial. It is not enough for schools simply to make time and space for independent reading" (p. 164). Shared discussions about the literature help build new insights by bringing in new points of view to ponder and discuss.

Literature Programs Enhanced Through Author Studies

The best way to get children to read and write is to show them that we care about them. A good way to do this is to build a "school for children" in our classrooms, by bringing their lives into the classroom. Let the children develop the bulletin boards, read their favorite stories and write about things that are important to them. Inviting children to bring their lives into the classroom allows them to be alive within their school existence and brings a greater intensity to their work. Calkins has shown that "Literacy is inseparable from living. . . . Our classrooms must be filled with our students' voices and their lives. . . .we do need to love and respect our children and to help them love and respect each other-and themselves" (p. 13).

Reading and writing workshops can bring a new "spirit and intimacy" into the classroom. This spirit and intimacy develops as learners share their lives and take time to learn about the lives of others. During the workshops, children are given time to read and write uninterrupted. They choose books and topics that are important to them. By making their own choices, the literature takes on new meaning and importance.

Reading workshops begin with mini lessons. During these lessons, teachers can do a variety of activities. The class can share

a poem and together, try to understand its meaning. This is a good time to introduce and talk about an author or genre. The class may focus on writing and reading processes and discuss how an author may have developed his/her ideas and stories (Atwell, 1987).

During these mini lessons, children can come to know about authors by learning about their lives, their inspirations, and their writing style. According to Routman (1991),

Frank Smith tells us that everything we need to know about reading and writing we can learn from authors. I believe this strongly, along with Nancie Atwell's notion that we have to make students "insiders," able to see the way the author has chosen to put the text together. Reading aloud is a powerful technique for promoting story enjoyment and literature appreciation and for noting what authors do in the writing process so that students can make similar choices for themselves (p. 33).

Author studies can be a useful strategy in linking literature and language arts together. Miles & Avi (1987) have said that the goal of an author study "is to make each child feel personally connected to the author, and, by extension, more enthusiastic about books and more knowledgeable about books and writing" (p. 21).

Authors as Real People

Author study is a strategy of introducing children to the people who write their books. From Trelease (1993) we learn that "Books are written by people, not machines; they are created by men and women with fascinating personal stories of how they came to be

writers and how they came to create a particular story" (p. xv).

Students learn that there are people behind their books that work hard at the writing process. By learning about the personal trials, experiences, and triumphs of the authors, children will begin to develop a warm and personal connection with the authors they read and enjoy.

Influence of Authors on Children

Authors, according to Kovacs and Preller (1991), "provide children with the magical experience derived from reading good books. And when children learn about an author's and/or illustrator's life and work, their reading often takes on a new meaning" (p. 7).

Students learn to read by reading, but the desire to read does not usually come easily. Author studies can help encourage children to read more. Reluctant readers often benefit from predictability in a text. By exposing children to the authors, the students can learn that the books they are reading are made by real people. They begin to recognize the author's style in other places. According to Harste, Short, & Burke (1988), "Books by the same author, in the same genre, or in a particular series become predictable for readers because of common structural elements" (p. 141). Readers are encouraged to seek out different materials written by these familiar authors. The children begin to recognize their works in other places. Studies

showed that author recognition also plays a significant role in the comprehension of proficient readers. Harste, Short, & Burke (1988) believe that "Once readers have identified the authorship of a selection, comprehension was greatly facilitated. When readers were unable to identify the author, they puzzled and speculated about possible authorship throughout their reading" (p. 146).

Students who find a particular author interesting, enthusiastically seek out their other books. An author study draws students into the books and encourages them to want to read more. Williams & Maio (1993) stated, "As students become familiar with characters and settings, they will seek out books in a series or books by the same author. Even reluctant readers find security in a knowledge of series characters and situations" (p. 2).

Writer/Illustrator's Style: A Model and Motivator for Readers

According to Atwell (1987), students are often interested in "how authors wrote-how they began and concluded books, developed characters, used dialogue, selected a narrative voice, pointed themes, structured chapters, followed or overthrew formulas and conventions" (p. 171). Authors can become strong role models for children. Individual authors have a personal and unique style that is used when developing stories and/or illustrations. Author studies can help children become aware of the styles that different authors

use and how they go about developing them into workable stories.

As children become familiar with the authors, they begin to recognize the author's style in other places. They begin to notice other books written in that particular genre or series. Readers often find an author's style that they enjoy and they are drawn to many of his/her other books. The predictability of an authors writing style encourages many children to read more of their books or to seek after similar books. The predictability of an author's common structure, encourages readers to read on.

In today's writing curriculum, children are learning to see themselves as authors. By introducing them to the authors as people, children begin to see that the books they enjoy are the product of people who work hard at their writing and the authoring process. Harste, Short, & Burke (1988) have stated that "As they [students] learn about the authors' lives and their thoughts about the authoring process, children become more aware of their own authoring process and of options they may not have considered before in their authoring" (p. 144). As writing role models, Atwell (1987) believes that authors "provide a powerful demonstration: with enough time to shape and reshape the writing, with topics and audiences we care about and with responses along the way, anyone can write well" (p. 154).

Through an introduction to the authors, children learn that there is more than one way to approach writing. Students can learn about a variety of strategies that some authors use when they approach writing. Many authors use a variety of unconventional methods when they begin writing. There is no one way to develop a story or characters. Some authors draw the pictures first, and then develop their story around these illustrations. Others write the end of the story first, and work their way to the beginning. Stories do not have to be plotted in advance. Sid Fleischman (1987) never knows where his stories will end up. He is just as anxious as the reader to find out what his characters will do next.

According to Kovac & Preller (1991), "When we celebrate children's authors and illustrators, we are, in fact, celebrating the potential and humanity in all of us. We celebrate every child's ability to think, to feel, to dream, and perchance . . . enrich our world simply by sharing his or her world with us" (p. 11). In light of the literature presented, it is evident that author studies can enhance a child's curiosity towards reading. Through creating positive relationships between authors and readers, children can develop the desire and motivation to become lifetime readers.

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of the project is to develop a resource guide to encourage teachers to teach their students about the authors of children's literature. The goal of the project is to provide teachers with a strategy to accompany their language arts program that can help encourage students to develop pleasure in reading. It is designed to help teachers become acquainted with resources and materials about authors, and places these materials may be available. The guide should help teachers organize and develop working author studies that can enhance and strengthen their literature program.

America's educational system is turning out students that know how to read, but many of them are not choosing to read. It is important that teachers teach children not only how to read, but encourage them to love reading. The desire to read comes from gaining enjoyment from the reading process. The educational trend of today is to teach reading by using trade books. Trade books are individual literature books, published in their complete form. The use of trade books, or literature based reading programs, help children to gain appreciation for literature. When teachers bring the study of children's authors into the classroom, they help children make personal connections with the authors they love and enjoy.

After children develop relationships with the authors, reading should begin to take on a new importance and enhance their desire to read more.

With this author's resource guide, teachers can begin to develop workable author studies. Until lately, there has been a lack of author materials available and many teachers have been unsure of where to research and how to begin developing their author studies. This resource guide should help teachers become aware of some of the resources that are available and where they may begin to look for them. The guide includes studies that have been developed for some popular picture book author/illustrators to help teachers get started. It includes: 1) information on how to begin to set up and start working with an author study, 2) biographical profiles and interviews, and suggestions of where these can be found, 3) summaries, annotations, and some classroom ideas for selected titles from each author, 4) bibliographical lists of selected titles of each represented author, and 5) suggestions of where teachers may go to find more information about authors.

This guide should serve as a resource to help teachers begin to acquaint themselves and their students with some of the authors of children's literature. Children have a natural curiosity about the people that write their books. By sharing some of the author's

personal life experiences and thoughts, we begin to help children make a connection between the authors and their literature.

Students are encouraged and excited to learn about the authors.

They begin to see authors as role models who demonstrate writing and encourage the children's own writing development. Author studies can be an important component to any literature based program. It is hoped that teachers will find this resource guide helpful and beneficial in planning, developing, and enjoying author studies.

Limitations

The use of author studies can be manipulated and used in all grade levels, however, this project is targeted for grades K-8. The project is a guide and a resource for teachers. They will need to start collecting materials about each author. There are limited resources available to help teachers in their search for author information, so they will have to be prepared to start slowly.

Author studies can be frustrating and difficult in the beginning, but the students' increased interest in reading and literature will be worth it. More and more publishers are beginning to make author related materials available, but many teachers still don't know where or how to begin to find them.

Materials about some authors are more difficult to find than others. Teachers will need to be diligent in their searches and collect things as they come. A collection of the author's books are important but can become costly. Buy the books slowly, share with other teachers, visit the library, etc. A large variety of the author's books help to show his/her style and develop the students interests. Video and audio tapes are also expensive for individual teachers to collect, but they can be very effective tools.

Although this resource guide can be applicable to all grade levels, book genres, etc., this project will be focusing on picture

books. Teachers will need to, and can easily adapt the information to their needs.

In writing this resource guide, a major limitation was the lack of documented information to support the use of author studies. Journal articles dealing with author studies were sparse. It was lucky if the subject was even mentioned within generally related topics. This is a relatively new field and little has been written about its use in the classroom. Class resources are not always easily obtained, however, most of the materials available have been developed by teachers. Most of the available information has been created by teachers and is slowly coming into its own importance. Teacher supply stores now offer a small selection of materials, highlighting authors and their works. Audio taped interviews have been produced by the Trumpet and Scholastic Book Clubs, but, they are not always readily available. Video tapes are now available through a few companies, however, they are not common and they are still relatively expensive.

Appendix

The Author Connection:

Bringing Children Into the World of Books

(A Resource Guide for Developing Author Studies)

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Introduction

Have you ever wondered how Tomie dePaola became an illustrator? Why does Patricia Polacco use the word babushka in so many of her stories? Where does Steven Kellogg get his ideas and characters for his books? Are Don Wood and Audrey Wood related? Who is Chris Van Allsburg? These are the types of questions that many readers may contemplate at one time or another. Most children and adults are curious and interested in the authors who write the books that they enjoy. Through author studies, children develop an acquaintance with the authors of the books they are reading. As they begin to read and experience the literature through the author's point of view, they begin to make new and interesting connections between the authors and their texts. The readers can come to see and enjoy the author's works in very different ways.

With the whole language and literature based movements in the schools, a greater emphasis has been put on writing, and more trade books are being used in the classroom. Whole language begins by developing meaning from a written piece, while developing the skills of word and sentence structure in the process. Literature based reading depends on trade books as a primary reading resource. Both reading approaches work hand in hand. With the increased interest in trade books, the need to teach children about the authors has

gained importance.

Author studies can enhance a child's desire to read more and provide strong role models in developing a child's writing skills. I have found that many children read only when they are forced to read by a teacher or other authoritative figure. These children may know how to read and may even be very good readers, but they have not yet developed the love or desire for reading. For some, it is a cold and impersonal activity that they are impelled to do, and it becomes a chore for them rather than a joy. With all of the distractions in our society, more and more of these children are easily distracted from books because they can easily find other forms of amusement and entertainment.

A literature based curriculum centers around children using literature books and learning of the authoring cycle that these author's use everyday in developing their own written works. What better way to enhance a program of this nature than to introduce children to the people who are writing their books and learning the processes that these authors have experienced as they developed their works. Often, children don't even realize that the books they are reading were written by real people. They never think about the human side of the book. Where did the book come from and why was it written? Through author studies, children learn the human

characteristics of the authors and their stories. They learn about how the authors find their ideas and the processes that they may use to develop them.

An author study can be a useful strategy in linking literature and language arts together. It can help to develop a positive connection between the author and the readers. To most students, an author is just a name printed on a book. By introducing the children to the authors, children realize that the books they read and enjoy are written by real people and not by machines. They learn that these authors work hard at their trade. Their books are often a product of many months, and sometime years, of working through the writing process. By learning about the authors' background, experiences, and home life, students can learn that the authors are ordinary people who have an idea to share. They have families, homes, and experience many of the same things that all of us experience. As the children learn about the authors, some of the mystery that surrounds the authors is illuminated and children are drawn to their works.

Tomie dePaola did not just become an illustrator and author, but many things in his life influenced him as he developed into a well known and loved children's author and illustrator. Tomie dePaola grew up living near his grandparents. Their influence, and

many of his other early life experiences were important to him, and often serve as a springboard for many of his stories. You can see his family's influence in books like Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs, Tom, and Watch Out for Chicken Feet in your Soup. These were all written based on his early experiences with his grandparents.

Tomie dePaola also writes or retells many folk tales and legends. By learning about the person, Tomie dePaola, we learn that his love for story telling may have come from his grandfather, who loved telling Tomie old folk tales and legends as a child. Some of his stories are autobiographical, like The Art Lesson and Oliver Button is a Sissy. Children wouldn't know this unless they were introduced to Tomie dePaola, the person. When children learn personal information about the authors, the stories are often raised to a new and different level of enjoyment and understanding.

Through author studies, children are given the time to think about and use literature books in more thoughtful ways. Students can gain a deeper and greater understanding of the books and learn new insights as to why and how the author wrote them. As the children experience the author's world, they can begin to make connections to their written work and develop valuable role models for their own writing. (Williams, R. L. and Maio, B.,1993).

Getting Started

An author study is a study centered around the life and profession of an author/illustrator. It is a strategy of introducing children to the people who write their books. "Books are written by people, not machines; they are created by men and women with fascinating personal stories of how they came to be writers and how they came to create a particular story" (Trelease, 1993, p. xv). By learning about the authors, readers can better understand and enjoy an author's work. Connections can be made between the reader, the author, and the author's work. Author studies can enhance a child's desire to read more and provide strong role models in developing a child's writing skills. According to Miles & Avi (1987), the goal of an author study "is to make each child feel personally connected to the author, and, by extension, more enthusiastic and knowledgeable about books and writing (p. 21).

To create a successful author study, it should be planned and much of the information should be searched out and collected ahead of time. Most teachers have trouble knowing where and how to begin finding information. This resource book is designed to help teachers begin using and developing their own author studies. It can be useful in helping teachers learn how to begin to search for information and resources that will help them successfully develop and use author

studies in their classroom. Included will be five sample studies that can be used and expanded upon.

Creating an Author Study

In creating an author study, there are no set guidelines or procedures to follow. Teachers and students can make the choices and work together in choosing the author and gathering resources that they feel are necessary and beneficial to the study. Below are some simple guidelines and suggestions that may be helpful: choosing an author, gathering resources, developing the classroom environment, and extended activities.

Choosing an Author

Begin by choosing an author that you enjoy. If you as the teacher are enjoying the study, your enthusiasm will show through and help develop the excitement of the children. Your students may have a favorite book or author that they are interested in learning more about. By allowing the children to help choose the authors, they will take a more active roll in looking for and gathering resources.

School and community librarians can be helpful in choosing appropriate authors. You can ask them about books that are frequently borrowed by children. This can be a good indicator of the popularity of an author's works, to children. Authors can also be

chosen to compliment a thematic unit in progress. Many authors write within a common theme or style and could easily be used to enhance a particular theme.

Gathering Resource

On first attempting to develop my own author studies, I found that I didn't have a clue on where to begin gathering information and materials. Little by little, I collected anything that I could find that was associated with authors. In time, I learned that resources were out there, if only you knew where to begin your search.

Begin preparing for your author study by gathering as many books as you can by the particular author or illustrator. Librarians can be helpful in finding many of the books. Sometimes parents and students can also be helpful in the search for books. While doing an author study on Chris Van Allsburg, I had a student in my class who showed a particular interest in this author. He had a collection of Mr. Allsburg's books that he brought in to share with the class. Through this student's enthusiasm and my own particular interest for this author, our excitement spread quickly to the rest of the class. Book clubs also offer books to schools at a reduced rate and teachers may use the bonus points they earn to buy books. These book clubs often offer special package deals on their books. This is an excellent way to begin collecting multiple copies and titles of an

author's work.

Since author studies are designed to help children and teachers become acquainted with the authors and the relationship they have to their work, it is helpful to find and use simple and concise biographies. As children learn who the authors are, they begin to develop a connection with the authors and their books. There are four excellent series of cumulative reference indexes that can be found in most college and major public libraries. Something about the Author (SATA) and Children Literature Review (CLR) are excellent cumulative indexes for finding information about authors. They are on going reference series that deal with the lives and works of authors/illustrators of children's books. Each year new volumes are added to the collection. Yesterday's Authors of Books for Children (covering authors who died before 1960) and Something about the Author Autobiography Series (SAAS) (containing autobiographical sketches) are also excellent resource indexes. These resources would be particularly useful and interesting to teachers developing author study units.

Something about the Author (SATA) is full of invaluable information about authors, illustrators, and their works. The series includes authors of literature for children and young adults. The entries cover authors from a wide variety of children's literature

topics and subject areas. SATA entries attempt to introduce the authors and their life histories as completely as they possibly can. Their entries contain personal data, general home and work addresses, career information, special memberships, awards and honors, writings, adaptations to films, television, etc., work in progress, further reading references, and illustrations.

Many children's book clubs have started developing video and audio cassette interviews of the authors. Book club author study kits often include an audio taped interview with the author, a poster, and written information about the author's life and works. These kits can be purchased with club bonus points. Video taped interviews of the authors are also being offered to teachers through these clubs, though their selections are limited. However, more publishers are beginning to develop their own video tape collections of interviews and these resources are becoming more available to the schools and teachers.

Author information can also be obtained through an author's publisher. By calling or writing the publisher, teachers can often obtain biographical sketches of the authors and can inquire about resources that may be available. Often posters, bookmarks, stickers, and/or buttons may be available to teachers. Because quantities are limited, only single copies of available materials will

be given on request. Promotional materials are not always available for every author or illustrator or every book title. Author materials are developed according to the number of requests and the season. All materials are given away until they are out-of-stock, then only biographical information is reprinted. [M. Hensch, Marketing Associate Children's Books, Houghton Mifflin Co. (personal communication, January 5, 1995).]

Upon writing a publisher, ask for the attention of the Children's Publicity or Promotions, or the Marketing Department for Children's Books. When requesting materials, make sure requests are made for the specific author(s) who are affiliated with the company. It is not helpful to the publisher to ask for "anything that is free" or for materials related to an author not associated with the company.

Some authors publish under a variety of different publishers. Check the title page of their most recent hardbound book for the appropriate publisher's name and address. This is also a good time to see about possible author correspondences through letters or personal visits (Cefali, L. & Lewis, V., 1993). I have found that most publishers are happy to assist teachers with promotional materials. Be very careful to find the correct and current address of each publisher. I was surprised at the number of letters returned to me because of a change in the publisher's address. Check addresses on

current catalogs or title pages on current hard bound editions to find current addresses. Also, current addresses may be found in Children's Books in Print or Literary Market Place. These reference books can be found in most local libraries.

Teacher magazines, journals, and book club catalogs often spotlight authors. This can be a good resource for pictures, biographical information, and book related activities that will support an author study. Also, more author related materials are now being developed and can be found in teacher supply stores. Creative Teacher Press has created a multi volume set of posters and information called "Meet the Authors". Teacher Ideas Press has developed "An Author a Month" series. These and other excellent resources are beginning to become more available to teachers. I will include a listing of some possible resources in the appendix.

Developing a Classroom Environment

Develop an area of the classroom where you can introduce the authors. Include a bulletin board where you can display pictures, posters, book covers, or anything that represents the author. In my classroom, I often display a poster exhibiting the author and his works. If possible, I find a picture of the author. This can be as simple as a photo copy of a picture from a magazine or from the Something about the Author entry. I have often photo copied

biographical information and included it on the bulletin board. I have also displayed the covers from my hardbound books. These added color, interest, and excitement to the board.

Collect and display a wide variety of the author's works. Fill the room with the author's books so that the students are free to experience and enjoy a variety of the literature. As they learn interesting facts about the authors and their books, the children will have fun reading on their own and begin to make connections between the authors life and their stories. A chart of butcher paper can be included in the room to keep a running list of the many new things the students are learning (Williams & Maio, 1993).

Extended Activities

Teachers can help develop a child's love and appreciation for a book, through the activities chosen to enhance it. By examining the author's style of writing and/or illustrating, the teacher can begin to develop lessons that help children learn to better understand the author's art of writing. Children can be encouraged to write in the same pattern/style that an author uses. Bill Martin uses a pattern of rhyme and prediction that children find joy and success in copying. My class made a tissue paper collage, as we learned about the art styling of Eric Carle. Activities that make children aware of an author's personal style, help them explore and begin to develop a

style of their own.

Children enjoy readers theater and developing their own skits. In reader's theater, the stories come alive with excitement as the children are given a character to read and develop. Their reading takes on a new meaning and enjoyment. I have experimented with reader's theater using a big book. I was pleasantly surprised when my third and fourth grade students were so eager to be involved. We read the story in a variety of ways and the children never lost interest. I am thoroughly convinced on the usefulness and power of using big books in the upper grades, where the children can read and experience them together. The author's literature can also be developed and performed as a play. These are only some of the very simple activities that can bring new life to a reading selection.

In another readers theater experience, I video taped the children as they acted out each parts. All of the children, even those who were usually less motivated, were captivated by the activity. All of the children worked very hard together and all children were on task. As they watched the results of their production, the children had a good laugh but felt a sense of pride in their accomplishments. The children were as equally involved when asked to develop skits around their favorite part of a story, in another literature experiences.

Children may want to write to a favorite author. They can write to an author through the author's current publisher. Authors often change publishers or work under different publishing companies. To find an author's current publisher, check the title page of an author's latest hardbound book. Letters can be written via the publisher. They are then forwarded to the author's home.

It is important to remember that authors are swamped with mail every year. Tomie dePaola receives 50,000 letters a year. It is basically impossible for an author to personally respond to this many letters and the economics of buying stamps alone would be tremendous. Often authors are unable to write back. Children must be aware and prepared in case this occurs. Do not expect an immediate response, and maybe no response at all. Sometimes an author will send a form letter that answers questions that are most often asked of him/ her and some will even write a personal note if they receive an extra special letter. Because of the volume of letters received, many author's simply do not respond to mail.

When sending an author letters, you should show consideration toward the author and can increase your chances of a response by: sending a self addressed/stamped envelope, writing a class letter, or allowing the class to choose from a variety of authors so that one author isn't swamped with thirty identical letters from one class.

Be sure that all return addresses are written clearly and correctly. Most authors appreciate receiving letters even if they are unable to respond to all of them.

Extended activities and discussions allow students the opportunity to discover the individual uniqueness of an author. Students can explore an author's style and may learn a little bit about how that style was developed. By experiencing the author's style, students then begin to develop and shape their own authoring style. These are only a few of the many ways that teachers and students can adapt what they are learning, and respond to it in a critical and inventive way.

Author Study Samples

Don and Audrey Wood

"I'm convinced I'm an author today because my mother didn't think reading books out loud to a four-month-old baby was starting out too young."

Audrey Wood

"Why read to little ones? Because it's more fun than anything else . . . and relaxing too."

Don Wood

The husband and wife team of Don and Audrey Wood have written and illustrated many exciting books for children. As a team, they have authored and illustrated children's favorites like: The Napping House, King Bidgood's in the Bathtub, and Moonflute. Audrey Wood has also written and illustrated many books on her own. Their books are fun and filled with interesting characters and beautifully detailed illustrations.

Don Wood: Biographical Highlights

Don was born May 4, 1945, on a farm in Atwater, California. The farm was located in the San Joaquin Valley of Central California, where they grew grapes, sweet potatoes, apricots, almonds, oranges, and a lot of peaches. By the time he was in sixth grade, Don had forty acres of sweet potatoes that he had to care for by himself. This was a big job for a young boy, because it needed hoeing, irrigating, and tending everyday. As he grew older, so did his

responsibility until he cared for one hundred acres. He and his brothers worked days in the fields and nights loading trucks to send to market. With the money they earned they were expected to buy their clothes, cars, college tuition, etc.

By sixth grade he decided that he would become an artist. Because of his farm responsibilities, there was no time to draw during the summer months. But Don drew during the winter months, where he would cover a whole page, developing a complete story on one page of paper. Unfortunately, he never seemed to find paper big enough to develop his story the way he wanted. He enjoyed laundry day, because his mother would give him the large brown paper that the laundry came wrapped in. The paper would cover the whole table and he would fill in all of it.

Don went to college at University of California at Santa Barbara where he studied fine arts and theater. Later, he gained a Master's in Fine Arts from the California College of Arts and Crafts.

Audrey Wood: Biographical Highlights

Audrey was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. Her earliest memories go back to before she was one year old, in Sarasota, Florida. Her parents were art students and to earn extra money, her father worked for the Ringling Brothers Circus at their winter quarters. Audrey's father would touch up and repaint the large

murals that would hang in the circus tents. Later the family went to study in San Miguel, Mexico where Audrey learned Spanish as her first language. By age five, Audrey's family moved to St. Lewis, Missouri, where Audrey began school. When Audrey was in fourth grade, after her parents finished their studying, they moved back to Little Rock, Arkansas. Audrey has two sisters, Jennifer and Edwina.

Audrey had a very early interest in reading because her parents had an extensive library and read to her as a very young child. She was interested in becoming a writer from the time she was very young. She had her own library of children's books and she often erased the authors' name and put in her own to pretend that she had written the book. At age fifteen, Audrey joined the Little Rock's Art Center, an institute developed by a group of artists, including her father and grandfather. There, she studied art and drama.

Audrey moved to Berkeley, California in the late 1960's where she met her husband, Don Wood. They were married on November 21, 1969. Don worked as a logger, a substitute teacher, and eventually, Don and Audrey traveled parts of Mexico, the Yucatan, and Guatemala, studying the arts and crafts of these people. They then went into business selling Mexican and Guatemalan art and books, in the Ozarks. Later, they settled in Santa Barbara, California where Don worked as a freelance magazine illustrator and Audrey began

publishing and selling her children's books.

Audrey begins her stories from an "idea box." When she gets the idea for a title and/or character sketch, she writes it down and puts it into her box. She is always looking for a good idea. Audrey has a habit of doodling and writing down ideas as she talks on the telephone. One of these doodles was later developed further by Don as he was on the phone and resulted in their only combined illustrated effort, Elbert's Bad Word.

Don and Audrey Wood: Working Together

Moonflute was Don and Audrey's first collaborative work. Audrey's story had been sold but they couldn't find an illustrator. At Audrey's request, Don submitted some drawings and was chosen to illustrate the book. Paintings from Moonflute were later chosen to be part of an exhibit called "The Artists as Illustrator/Children's Literature" in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Since Moonflute, Don and Audrey have collaborated on a number of works, such as: The Napping House, King Bidgoods in the Bathtub, Heckedy Peg, etc.

In Don's art work, he considers himself "a fumbler, a fiddler, and a doer-over" (Veblin, 1990). He likes to work in oils because it allows him the time to change and rework his picture, since it dries slowly. His work is very "rounded" and full (has form). This is done

through shading. He likes to use models for his characters. Audrey and their son Bruce have modeled for many of his illustrated characters. Friends, family, and community people can also be seen in many of their books. Don even modeled for the character of the witch in Heckedy Peg and he used their own house as a model for The Napping House.

Audrey uses a much different style in her art work. Unlike Don who likes to work in oils, Audrey likes to work in watercolors. Although their styles are different, they agree on many things that make their books so successful. Audrey usually writes the books and Don has illustrated many of them. However, they often collaborate on many aspect of their books. As Audrey writes the story, Don will often act as an editor. They talk about what is happening and find out what each likes about the other's work. They ask each other for suggestions and input about the story. It is helpful for them to find out what each other thinks is exciting and to see the story from a different viewpoint. They find this to be a very definite advantage to their work. Don has also worked on paintings for "Faerie Tale Theater", by Shelley Duvall.

Books To Get Started

King Bidgoods in the Bathtub

Summary

King Bidgood is a king who refuses to leave the bathtub. The Court Page has the awesome task of finding someone who can encourage the King to leave. One by one, all the members of the King's Court try to persuade him to leave the bathtub, and fail. At the end, the young Page finally finds the answer that convinces the King to leave. He pulls the plug.

Annotation/Notes

This is a fun book written and illustrated by the popular team of Don and Audrey Wood. The story, by Audrey Wood, is written in a simple, rhythmic pattern that can be enjoyed by all. The story uses repetition and predictable patterns so it can easily be read and enjoyed by young readers. Although the text is meant to be simple, the pictures give very complex details.

The illustrations are beautifully painted by Don Wood. They bring the simple text alive and tell so much more than the words can say. Each picture is a masterpiece of its own. They are extremely detailed and draw the reader into the world of King Bidgood. Because Don likes to use models as he illustrates, many of Audrey Wood's family, their friends, and their publisher were used as

models for the characters of the court and their son, Bruce, modeled for the young Page. It is best for Don if the models can be present, but he will often work with photographs.

Although the theme is simple, the setting is very complex. The theme can be experienced through the words, but the illustrations establish the setting for the story. This story is set in the Renaissance period. This also adds to the special flavor of the book. This time period is never mentioned in the text, but the illustrations create an atmosphere and tell a story of their own. The readers can see new and interesting details each time they read the book.

The characters consist of the King and his court. The King is a jovial and eccentric character that adds to the fun of the story. The obedient Page is always there by his side to answer to the needs of the King. The costumes of the Court are elaborate and add to the fascination that this book brings to the reader.

This is a great book for readers theater, choral reading, and drama. The predictability and simple text make it easy to understand and remember. These activities can be aided with the use of the big book edition. The children can see all the words at one time and the pictures draw the reader into the book.

The simplicity and predictability of this book makes it excellent for beginning readers. It helps children experience growth

and success in a risk-free environment. King Bidgood's In The Bathtub has won many honors, including the Caldecott Honor Book, 1986 and the American Library Association Notable Children's Book, 1986.

The Napping House

Summary

A cumulative tale about a house where everyone is sleeping. One by one, the characters quietly get on the bed to take a nap, starting with the granny, then the child, then the Dog . . . until they reach a not so sleepy flea. As the flea bites the mouse, it starts a chain reaction and ends up with nobody sleeping.

Annotation/Notes

This is a cumulative and predictable tale that is easy and enjoyable for beginning readers. Close attention to the art work helps to reveal the predictable nature of the story. The reader can watch as each character slowly makes his way to the bed. Don Wood used the Wood's Santa Barbara home as a model for the house. The boy in The Napping house was modeled by their son. This book was honored as one of the New York Times Ten Best Illustrated Children's Books of the Year, 1984 and also received the Young Reader Medal, California Reading Association, 1985.

Heckedy Peg

Summary

Heckedy Peg is the tale of a poor woman and her seven children. The mother must go to market, but she must leave her children at home. She tells them not to let any strangers in the house and don't touch fire. The children fail to listen when a poor, old woman (Heckedy Peg) comes by and asks to come in and light her pipe. The old woman is really a witch who turns the children into food and carries them off in her cart.

The mother must find her children and save them from the terrible witch. As Heckedy Peg is about to eat the food (children), the mother finds them. She must break the terrible spell by guessing which child was turned into which food. The mother does break the spell and then chases the witch until she jumps off the bridge and is not seen again.

Annotation/Notes

In this tale, Audrey modeled as the mother and seven school children were chosen to play the children in the story. They ran into a bit of a problem when it came to finding a character to play the role of the witch, so Audrey came up with an idea. She dressed Don as a witch and put a lot of make-up on him. Audrey's father then took a picture of him and that became the model for the witch,

Heckedy Peg.

The illustrations were painted with great care and detail by Don Wood. They resemble the typical fairy tale setting that most readers would be familiar with. It seems to be set in an old English, country community. The costumes are like those of the simple, plain, country folk or peasants. Since this is kind of a dark tale, Don used many brown color tones and shades. His illustrations and use of color, help the reader develop the mood and become a part of this dark, mysterious tale.

Books Independently Completed by Audrey Wood

Weird Parents

Summary

Weird Parents is a story about a young boy who has weird parents. His parents are always doing things that unintentionally embarrass him in front of his friends. They dress weird, say things that embarrass the child, put weird things in his lunch, laugh in all the wrong places when they go to the show, etc. The boy wonders why his parents have to be so weird. But as he thinks of all the good things about his parents, he decides that they are really okay, after all.

Annotation/Notes

Much of the Weird Parents story was really written as an

autobiographical story about Don and Audrey. We all think that our parents are weird, or we are now the weird parents. Audrey believes that all children view their parents as weird. She thought her parents were weird, and her son thinks she and Don are weird now. Most children think their parents are weird and embarrass them from time to time.

The illustrations were done by Audrey Wood. As an artist, Audrey is opposite Don. She never uses models in her work. She always uses her memory and subconscious. Her characters come from doodling until they develop into the character she wants. Because Audrey uses a different medium and style to her art, she can finish her illustrations quicker than Don. She works in watercolor and pencil instead of oil, which is a much faster process.

The Princess and the Dragon

Summary

The Princess and the Dragon is a fairy tale about a princess who doesn't want to behave like a princess. She has no manners and everybody hopes that their children will not be like the princess. In this same kingdom is a dragon that doesn't want to behave like a dragon. He doesn't want to hurt anyone. The dragon and the princess are both very unhappy with their lives, so they decide to change places.

The kingdom is thrilled with the manners of the new princess (the dragon) and nobody really cared much about the new dragon (the princess). Nobody cared much except for the Knight who had to save the princess from the dragon, and who ended up always being captured himself. Nobody in the kingdom lived in fear anymore and everyone now lived happy and safe.

Other Selected Titles by Don and Audrey Wood

Heckedy Peg (Harcourt Brace, 1987).

King Bidgood's in the Bathtub (Harcourt Brace, 1985).

The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear
(Child's Play, 1984).

Moon Flute (Harcourt Brace, 1980).

Napping House (Harcourt Brace, 1980).

Piggies (Harcourt Brace, 1991).

Quick as a Cricket (Child's Play, 1982).

Audrey Wood

Little Penguin's Tail (Harcourt Brace, 1989).

Magic Shoelaces (Child's Play, 1980).

Oh, My Baby Bear! (Harcourt Brace, 1990).

Silly Sally (Harcourt Brace, 1992).

Weird Parents (Dial, 1990).

The Trumpet Club (1990) offers an audio taped interview with Don and Audrey Wood.

Tomie dePaola

"If you know how and love to read, you can find out ANYTHING about EVERYTHING and EVERYTHING about ANYTHING."

Tomie dePaola

Biographical Highlights

Tomie dePaola (de POW la), born Thomas Anthony dePaola, was born on September 15, 1934, in Meriden, Connecticut. He grew up in Meriden during the Second World War with his Italian father, Irish mother, his older brother Joseph Jr. (Buddy), and two younger sisters, Maureen and Judie. Tomie was named after both of his grandfathers, his Irish grandfather, Tom Downey, and his Italian grandfather, Anthonio dePaola.

Tomie's childhood was very happy. He grew up having his grandparents fairly near which was very important to him. You can learn more about Tomie's relationship with his grandparents in books like Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs and Tom. His parents were very social and they had many friends. There were always parties and people in the house. Holidays were very festive, social events. Today, Tomie enjoys having people around, and has a big open house (party) in his barn (office) every Christmas. Tomie also started tap dancing in 1940 and still enjoys tap dancing today.

Tomie dePaola loves to read. His mother read to the children

every night. Tomie was so excited about learning to read that he couldn't wait to start school. On his first day of kindergarten, Tomie came home upset because his kindergarten teacher told him that he would not learn how to read this year, but he would learn in first grade. At gaining this knowledge, he walked out of the school and told them he would be back next year to read. Tomie's mother had to convince him that he couldn't go to first grade until he passed kindergarten, so he went back to school. He loved to read, but he never really enjoyed school books. He never felt that they were real books. Because his mother read and thought reading was important, they always had books in the house and he went to the library often.

As far back as Tomie dePaola can remember, he loved to draw. By the age of four, he started telling people that he was going to be an artist and make books when he grew up. He was always drawing. His family was very encouraging and supported him by giving him art supplies for every birthday and Christmas. Tomie would draw everywhere he could, even on the sheets on his bed. Once, he got the chance to draw on the walls of their new home. Before the family put up the wallpaper, Tomie was allowed to draw his own pictures there.

Tomie dePaola loves to tell stories. This interest developed back with his Irish grandfather, who was always telling him stories.

Some of these stories would even get him into trouble. Once, after hearing a story from his grandfather, Tomie rushed to school to tell his teacher about it. When the teacher said that that couldn't possibly happen, Tomie was upset because he believed the story to be true and he knew his grandfather wouldn't lie to him.

Drawing often got him into trouble at school because he liked to draw rather than do arithmetic, which was not his favorite subject. Art was his favorite subject, but he also loved to read. Tomie found out that if you are good at reading, then you can be good at every other subject. He was good at history, science, spelling, etc. He loved to read the encyclopedia, of which they had three sets in their home. He has a great visual memory which helped him in school, and in later developing the details of his early life, in his books.

Tomie dePaola's first book was illustrating a science book called Sound (1963), but, before publishing his book, he had to paint and sell pictures in art shows. Later, he taught art at the college level. While working on his first book, Tomie worked with a new editor, at Putnam Publications. She is still working with him after 25 years. As an Editor, she helps Tomie discuss, develop, refine, and clarify his stories. They share their ideas and thoughts. Tomie also works with an art director who helps him refine his art work.

He has now written and/or illustrated over 190 books.

Many of the things that surround Tomie dePaola's life are often found in his works. Experiences with his family and his early life are found in his books. One of dePaola's neighbors was the inspiration for the women who is in search of pancakes in Pancakes for Breakfast. His house at Whitebird was dePaola's inspiration for The Night Before Christmas and some of the patterns from his personal quilt collection can be seen as borders and on the beds of this book.

At one time, Tomie dePaola became part of a monastery with intention of joining it and becoming a brother. He later decided against taking his vows but now creates materials for the Catholic churches and monasteries. He has developed a variety of Christmas books like The Friendly Beast: A Old English Christmas Carol and Legend of Old Befana. Tomie dePaola now lives in New Hampshire, where he also works. Most of his stories have been encouraged and influenced by his childhood experiences and relationships. You can learn about Tomie dePaola just by reading his books. However, it is fun to see the new life his books take on as children learn some of the background experiences that lead to the books. The ideas for his books come from everywhere. They can come from things that he has actually experienced, old folk tales, and from other people. As a

word of advice, Tomie tells children to read and he asks teachers to find books that the children will love to read.

Books To Get Started

Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs

Summary

This is a story about Tomie dePaola's Irish grandmother and great-grandmother. Tommy loved to visit his grandmother and great-grandmother who lived together. Great-grandmother was ninety-four and had to stay in bed upstairs, so she was called, "Nana Upstairs." Grandmother was usually downstairs, busy at the stove. Tommy called her "Nana Downstairs." The story explores four year old Tommy's relationship with his grandmothers. When Nana Upstairs passes away, Tommy needs to learn to deal with this loss. Later, as an adult, Tommy watched as Nana Downstairs got old and she too, passed away. Tommy then comes to the realization that both grandmothers are now Nana Upstairs.

Annotation/Notes

Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs is a warm story that develops the relationship of a child and adult, and explores the concept of death in a simple way. This is the first book of three that Tomie dePaola feels were autobiographical about his own life. The text is simple and tells a story of the relationship between a young child

and an older adult. This is a theme that children should become more comfortable with and sensitive to.

The story takes place in the home where Tomie's grandmother and great-grandmother lived together. This is a typical setting that children can easily relate to. Children who have spent time with their grandparents or an older adult, can make a connection to the experience and feeling tone that this story so strongly suggests.

The characters are very real and believable. It is difficult for the reader not to get caught up in what is happening in the story. This is a story about relationships, but it is also a story about relating to the death of people who are close to us. When Nana Upstairs (great-grandmother) dies, the reader can feel the loss that the young boy is feeling.

The illustrations are the signature style of Tomie dePaola. They are simple, but work effectively at drawing the reader closer to the story. Again, I think they are pictures that readers can relate to. They help support the text, keep the story moving, and keep the readers attention and focus.

Since Tomie dePaola has stated that this was like the first chapter of his autobiography, this would be an excellent source to enhance an author study of Tomie dePaola. It would also fit well into a grandparents theme.

From the story, children can write their own memoirs about a special relationship with a grandparent or any older adult. Children can be encouraged to write letters and renew their ties to an old relationship or talk about a relationship they would like to develop.

The Art Lesson

Summary

The Art Lesson is the story about young Tomie. Tomie's favorite thing to do was to draw. He drew all the time. He knew that someday he wanted to be an artist. His family hung his pictures everywhere. Once, with a flashlight and pencil, Tomie even drew on the sheets of his bed.

The story continues with his art experiences in school. He had many unsatisfactory encounters with art until Mrs. Bowers, the art teacher came to school. Unhappy with the idea of copying pictures, Tomie protested in frustration. After Tomie and the teacher reached an agreement, he followed along and completed classroom assignments and then was allowed to draw anything he liked, using his own crayons. So Tomie drew and drew and continues to draw today.

Annotation/Notes

The Art Lesson is an autobiographical look at how Tomie dePaola developed his desires and interests in becoming an

illustrator and author. It explores the support of his family who always encouraged him by displaying his pictures and buying him art supplies for birthdays and Christmas. Tomie drew on everything. He drew on his sheets, with a flashlight, in bed. Once when the family was building a house, Tomie was able to draw on the walls, before they were finally finished with wallpaper.

This is a children's book based on Tomie dePaola's early life. The story is written in simple language and the illustrations are typical of the work of Tomie dePaola. The main character and plot of this story were developed from the real life experiences of Tomie dePaola, and is a character that many children can relate to. The plot of this story deals with the early experiences that encouraged and helped the author become who he is today. It can be encouraging to children who have dreams and wonder if they can ever come true.

Illustrations are simple, support the text, and help develop the feeling tone of the story. They help to develop the emotions and feeling of the character. They are pictures that children can easily understand and relate to. This story can strongly support an author study spotlighting Tomie dePaola. In his playful way, Tomie tells of the things that influenced his life and helped him develop into the author/illustrator we know today. Children can quickly make connections between the story and the biographical information they

are learning and collecting about Tomie dePaola. They can be encouraged to write their own autobiography or family history. This literature could be used to support a unit on biographies.

Tom

Summary

Tom is a story written about Tomie's Irish grandfather. The story explores the relationship between a young boy and his grandfather. Tom and Nana owned a grocery store where Tom worked at the butcher table, cutting meat for customers. One day Tom gave little Tomie some chicken feet and showed him how you could make the feet move by pulling the tendons. At home, Tomie cleaned the feet up, painted the toe nails and began playing with them. Tomie decided to take the feet to school, which got him into trouble and a note sent home. Tom and Tomie were not worried, they would just have to find something else to do.

Annotations/Notes

Tom is a story about the relationship between a grandfather and his grandson. This could be a relationship that many children can relate to and understand. The story is simple and humorous. Children can easily become a part of the story and imagine being a part of it. The pictures are simple, yet they draw the reader into the text in a way that Tomie dePaola has so skillfully refined.

Oliver Button is a Sissy

Summary

Oliver Button is a Sissy is a story based on another early experience of Tomie dePaola. Oliver likes to read books, draw pictures, and play dress up. Everyone begins calling him a sissy because he doesn't particularly like what boys are suppose to like.

Oliver liked to dance, so he was sent to dancing school to learn tap dancing. All the boys teased him but Oliver just kept on dancing. At the school's big talent show, Oliver decides to dance. He did not win, but he tried hard to be brave. His family was very proud of him. Oliver was afraid to go to school because of what the kids would say. But, when he walked into the school he noticed "Oliver is a star!" written on the wall and he felt better.

Annotation/Notes

This is a simple story about children accepting other children's differences. It helps children learn to take pride in their abilities and gain a willingness to share their talents with others. By sharing his tap dancing, Tomie gained greater confidence, love, and a talent that he still enjoys working on and sharing today.

Other Selected Titles by Tomie dePaola

An Early American Christmas (Holiday House, 1987).
The Art Lesson (Putnam, 1989).
Bill and Pete (Putnam, 1978).
Bill and Pete Go Down The Nile (Putnam, 1987).
Bonjour Mr. Satie (Putnam, 1991).
Charlie Needs A Cloak (Simon and Shuster, 1973).
The Cloud Book (Holiday, 1975).
Cookie's Week--illustrated (Putnam, 1988).
Fin M'Coul: The Giant of Knockmany Hill (Holiday House, 1992).
Four Scary Stories (Putnam, 1978).
The Friendly Beasts (Putnam, 1981).
Hey Diddle Diddle: and other Mother Goose Rhymes (Putnam, 1988).
Jamie O'Rourke And The Big Potato (Whitebird 1992).
The Kids Cat Book (Holiday House, 1979).
Kitten Kids And The Missing Dinosaur (Golden book, 1988).
The Knight And The Dragon (Putnam 1980).
The Legend of The Bluebonnet (Putnam, 1983).
The Legend of The Indian Paintbrush (Putnam, 1988).
Little Grunt And The Big Egg (Holiday, 1990).
Marianna May and Nursey (Holiday House 1983).
Mary Had A Little Lamb--illustrated (Holiday House, 1984).
Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs (Trumpet Club, 1989).
Now One Foot, Now The Other (Putnam, 1981).
Oliver Button Is A Sissy (Harcourt, 1979).
Pancakes For Breakfast (Harcourt, 1978).
The Popcorn Book (Scholastic Inc., 1978).
Strega Nona (Simon and Schuster, 1975).
Strega Nona's Magic Lesson (Harcourt, 1982)
Teeny Tiny (Putnam, 1985).
Tom (Putnam, 1993).
The Quicksand Book (Holiday House, 1977).
The Quilt Story (Putnam, 1985).
The Vanishing Pumpkin (Putnam, 1983).
The Walking Coat (Simon and Schuster, 1980).
Watch Out For Chicken Feet In Your Soup (Simon and Schuster 1974).

Patricia Polacco

"We are one and we are American, but celebrate the differences! Celebrate the differences, instead of finding fault and singling others out because they are different. You should be very proud that you are different."

Patricia Polacco

Biographical Highlights

Patricia Polacco was born in Lansing, Michigan on July 11, 1944. Her parents were divorced when she was three, so Patricia moved with her mother and brother to Union City, Michigan, where they lived with Patricia's maternal grandparents. Later, Patricia's mother acquired a teaching position in Coral Gable, Florida. Finally, in 1954, her family moved to Oakland, California. She spent the rest of her childhood there and still lives there with her family today. Although Patricia, her mother, and her brother lived in Oakland, the children were able to visit their father often. They spent the school year with their mother, but spent the summer with their father in Michigan. Their father would also often visit them in Oakland four or five times during the school year.

From the time she was very young, Patricia enjoyed drawing. School was very difficult for her, but she was able to find success in her drawing ability. Patricia had a difficult time learning to read

and do arithmetic. To compensate for her learning difficulties, Patricia would tell stories and draw. From the age of four, she was already able to draw using perspective. When she was 14, a teacher finally helped her receive testing and found that she had a learning disorder called dyslexia. Once this handicap was discovered, the teacher assisted her in getting help from a reading specialist so that she could learn how to deal with it. As she began having more success in school, she found that she really was not dumb.

Patricia's books are greatly influenced by early family experiences and her strong ethnic heritage. They are filled with experiences that readers will enjoy more as they learn the history that helped inspire the stories. Patricia's maternal relatives were Russian Jews. Her great grandparents fled from Russia to America and ended up in New York. From there, they scraped together and saved enough money to purchase a farm in Michigan.

It was important to her family to settle where there were others who had similar backgrounds and beliefs. In Michigan, they lived in an area with many Russian immigrants, but there were no Russian Jews. This allowed Patricia to grow up with the rich Jewish heritage she learned from her family, but she also experienced and was influenced by the Christian Russians of the community. This helped Patricia develop a great respect for her own

and other religious beliefs. When she later moved to Oakland, she lived in a multicultural community that helped her develop and learn to respect the differences in others. Through her many childhood experiences, she has developed a great respect for religious and cultural differences. She believes that people should “celebrate the differences” and not try to hide or loose them. People should be proud of their differences and share them.

As she grew, she was always a storyteller. Just telling an ordinary story was not good enough. She loved to embellish each one as she told them over and over again. She may have developed her love of story telling from her father who was also a great storyteller.

Patricia always knew that she was going to become an artist, because it was what she could do well. After graduating from high school, she went to Laney College and later to the California College of Arts and Crafts. Later, she studied in Australia for five years where she earned her Masters (1973) in Fine Arts and her Ph.D. (1978) in Art History. She then worked as a historical consultant to a museum. It wasn't until 1986, when Patricia was 41 years old, that she wrote and illustrated her first book. However, she has written many books since then.

Rocking chairs are a very important part of who Patricia is and

what she does. As a child, she had a difficult time holding still. Today, the rocking chair helps her to relax and compose her stories. She has thirteen rocking chairs in her house and there is a rocking chair in almost all of her books. Patricia will often sit in a chair and listen to music on a Walkman. The music helps her to focus and concentrate on her work. She will rock in the chair until she is able to see and hear the stories over and over again. This is done until Patricia is pretty sure of the sense of the story. Then, depending on how the story came to her, she will sit at the typewriter and type it up, or she will begin drawing the illustrations and then add the dialog. Patricia writes in her studio, in her home. She usually works by inspiration unless she is pressured by a publishing deadline. Patricia writes to please the child inside her. She often tells children that she feels like a 9 1/2 year old trapped in a 48 year old body. (Maizer, 1993)

Patricia and her husband Enzo-Mario Polacco still live in the middle of Oakland. They (along with her cats) live in an old brown-shingled house surrounded by many trees. This house is just two blocks from her childhood home. Her son, Steven, and her daughter Traci Denise are both now grown. As a child, Patricia learned how to paint Ukrainian eggs (pisanky), which is a craft she still enjoys today. These Ukrainian eggs are used in many of her stories.

Most of Patricia's stories are filled with her family's heritage, traditions, and experiences. As you read her stories, you learn more about who Patricia Polacco is and the interesting things that have influenced her life. As children learn about her life experiences and how they relate to her stories, the stories gain more significance to the reader and they develop a stronger connection and understanding of the author and her work.

Meteor was Patricia's first book. It is based on the story of a meteor that crashed into their family farm yard during her mother's childhood. It was her mother's family that came up with the story that if you touched the meteor and wished, the wish would come true. It is a story about believing in and making things happen for yourself.

The Keeping Quilt is based on her family history. Patricia's great, great grandmother made the quilt using her great grandmother's dress along with material pieces from clothing of others in her family. When her family fled from Russia to America, they could not bring much with them and many of their loved ones were left behind. They escaped with a burlap bag containing a few important things including pieces of clothing of family members that were left behind.

When Anna, Patricia's great grandmother, arrived in America,

she missed her homeland. Her mother took the clothing of the relatives, and Anna's dress, and sewed them into a quilt. Anna's mother gave it to her to remind her of where she came from and who she was. Patricia still has the quilt and it is used for every family ceremony and special event. The quilt will later be handed down to Patricia's daughter, Traci.

Thunder Cake is a story about Patricia's fear of thunderstorms. The thunderstorms in Michigan can be very fierce and when Patricia was young, she would hide under the bed to escape them. To help her stand up to her fears, Patricia and her grandmother would make this cake for her during a thunderstorm. They had to work quickly to try to beat the thunderstorm.

Mrs. Katz and Tush is a story that enhances Patricia's belief that we should celebrate our cultural differences instead of picking on them. Tush, the cat in the story, is also one of Patricia's cats. Chicken Sunday is a story about differences and trusting what you have in your own heart. Although people are different on the outside, they are so very similar on the inside. Patricia believes that people should be discerning about the friends they choose. They should depend on what's in their hearts and not on stereotypes. The characters from this story were based on real people from Patricia's childhood.

The Bee Tree was based on a family tradition. In her mother's family, when a child became old enough to read, they would put honey on top of a book. The child would taste the honey and respond that it was sweet. The child would then be told that "knowledge is sweet. Knowledge is in the book." Because of Patricia's reading difficulties, she often wondered if the promise of sweetness would ever be hers. When she finally received help, she ran home and put honey on the cover of Great Expectations and licked it off. She now knew that she was going to be able to read and taste the sweetness of knowledge.

Books To Get Started

The Keeping Quilt

Summary

The Keeping Quilt is a story that tells the history of Patricia's Russian ancestry. It is a story of a quilt that was made by Patricia's great, great grandmother. When Patricia's Great-Gramma Anna came to America, she was just a little girl. The family had to leave Russia in such a hurry that they left most of their belongings and many loved ones behind. Anna missed the people and things of her homeland. As she grew out of her old dress, Anna's mother took the dress and other items of old clothing from family members still back in Russia and made a quilt. The quilt would help them to

remember their homeland and help them to always have their family around them.

Annotation/Notes

The quilt has stayed in the family as a special heirloom. It was, and is still, used for important family events and ceremonies. It is used for weddings, welcoming a new child, celebrating the Sabbath, etc. The quilt has been passed down from daughter to daughter. Patricia now has the quilt but will give it to her daughter when the time comes.

This is an autobiographical account of a family's love and respect for each other and their culture. Children love to hear stories about where they came from and who they are. Through this story, children learn a great deal about Patricia Polacco and gain a respect for her family culture. It is a story about family relationships and cultural differences. The illustrations have a strong Russian flavor and the characters are full of personality and strength. Through experiencing The Keeping Quilt, children learn of the Jewish culture and become familiar with selected Russian vocabulary.

The Bee Tree

Summary

Mary Ellen was restless and didn't feel like reading. Grampa

suggested that it was time to find a bee tree, in search of the sweetest honey in the land. Grampa and Mary Ellen went out into the garden to capture some bees. When they were sure they had enough, Grampa let one bee go and the chase was on. They had to follow the bee to his home in the bee tree.

Along the way, others joined in the chase until many neighbors and town folk were following the bee, too. As the group would lose the trail of one of the bees, Grampa would release another of the captured bees. Soon they came upon the bee tree. After quieting the bee with a smoke fire, Grampa brought out a honey comb, dripping with sweet honey.

At home, Grampa put some of the honey on the cover of a book and asked Mary Ellen to taste it. Grampa then told her of the sweetness found inside of books. He said that books were full of wisdom and adventure but they must be pursued, just as they pursued the bee to obtain the rich sweetness of the honey.

Annotation/Notes

Patricia masterfully tells the story based on one of her own family traditions. The story celebrates the joy and adventure one gets from reading. The Illustrations are full of the style and grace that is so typical of Patricia's work. You can feel her love for her family and her culture in every picture. Patricia is doing what she

likes to do most, celebrating her cultural differences and sharing them with us so that we can celebrate the differences with her.

The book is set in a rural setting. The story and illustrations portray a simple life with close ties to friends and family. The theme of this book tells us that the sweetest things in life must be worked for. Through the telling of this story, Patricia shares one of her family traditions, one that she found to be important as she herself, struggled to learn the joy of reading.

Meteor

Summary

One summer evening in Michigan a meteor fell from the sky and landed with a crash on Gramma and Grandpa Gaw's farm. News of this exciting and important event spread through the small town. As the news spread, the story also grew and everyone headed for the Gaw's place to experience the "mysterious meteor." People continued to arrive until the farm soon resembled a carnival. Scientist from the University of Michigan came to authenticate the finding as being an actual Meteor.

During the festivities, news spread of the magical qualities the meteor seemed to have. Tommy claimed that he could play the trumpet better than ever after touching the meteor. Marietta said that she thought up her best pie recipe after touching it. Story after

story seemed to boast of the extraordinary powers of this special meteor. The meteor was a source of wonder to this small town. Whether these things would have happened or not, may never be known.

Annotation/Notes

The meteor actually fell from the sky during Patricia's mother's childhood. It is a wonderful and warm story about small town life and closeness. The pictures are colorful and full of life and expression. The character illustrations add to the small town feeling and portray the emotions of the day's excitement. Even the animals personify human characteristics and emotions. Children are fascinated by this extraordinary tale and enchanted by Patricia's storytelling ability.

Other Selected Titles by Patricia Polacco

Appelmand's Dreams (Philomel, 1991).
Babushka's Doll (Simon, 1990).
The Bee Tree (Philomel, 1993).
Casey at the Bat--illustrated only (Scholastic Inc., 1993).
Chicken Sunday (Scholastic Inc., 1992).
Just Plain Fancy (Bantam, 1990).
The Keeping Quilt (Simon, 1988).
Meteor! (The Trumpet Club, 1987).
Mrs. Katz and Tush (Dell, 1992).
Rechenka's Eggs (Philomel, 1988).
Some Birthday! (Simon and Schuster, 1991).
Thunder Cake (Philomel, 1990)
Uncle Vova's Tree (Philomel, 1989)

Eric Carle

"I am fascinated by the period in a child's life where he/she leaves the house to go to school; what a gap! I should like my books to bridge that great divide."

Eric Carle

Biographical Highlights

Eric Carle was born June 25, 1929, in Syracuse, New York. He lived there until 1935, when his parents (both of German decent) moved back to Germany when he was six years old. This was not an easy change for Eric. He understood German, but since he lived in America, he had only learned to speak English. In Germany, he had to learn a new language and get used to a new culture. America was easy going, while Germany was more rigid. Once in Germany, he started school which was also much more rigid, with more strict discipline than he had experienced in America.

In Stuttgart, Germany, Eric lived in a four family house that was bought by his grandfather. The house was shared by his uncle, wife, child, and mother-in-law on the top floor, his grandparents with their daughter and her child on the next floor, and then Eric's family.

As far back as he can remember, Eric knew that he wanted to draw. It was a skill that gave him a lot of pride and satisfaction.

His father had always wanted to be an artist, but his father's father would never let him. He didn't want to have a starving artist in the family. But Eric's father did draw for Eric. When Eric showed an interest and ability in drawing, his parents were always supportive.

Eric was also influenced by his Uncle August. He was a painter, and a colorful and entertaining storyteller. Eric would often go to his studio to hear a story. He would say,

Uncle August, tell me a story.' peering over his glasses he'd say, 'first you have to wind up my thinking machine.' and, as I had done many times before, I began to wind an imaginary lever near his temple. After a little while---all along he made whirring noises---he shouted, 'Halt! I have a story for you! (Danckert, 1992)

Eric believes that his Uncle August had the right idea, stories come from our thinking machines. People just have to remember to wind them up.

Eric's father was always very important to him. He would often walk and spend time with him. They would often explore the world of ants and other small creature. When Eric was 10, his father was drafted into the German Army. Eight years later, when Eric was 18, his father returned from a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. He feels like he lost his father during this time, but he also feels that he was inspired by his father. He believes that his work now, honors his father, and that he is doing what his father would

have liked to have done himself.

Eric Carle studied art at the Academy of Applied Arts, in Stuttgart, Germany. After becoming a commercial artist, he worked as a graphic designer for a German fashion magazine and made posters for the U. S. Information Center in Stuttgart. However, from the time that Eric was six years old and left America to go to Germany, he knew that he would one day return to America. In 1952, when Eric was 22 years old, he returned to America without a job and only a suitcase and 40 dollars in his pocket.

In America, Eric went to live with an uncle who lived in the Bronx. It was here that a neighbor gave him the number of an advertising agency that she had once worked for. At the agency, they told him to go to the Art Directors Show. Here he looked at many different ads. He was impressed with the beautiful ads done by Fortune Magazine. He found that the art director was Leo Lionni, so he looked him up and gave him a call. He was invited to meet with him the next day. After looking through his portfolios, Leo Lionni called the art director of the New York Times. The Times looked over his portfolio and gave him a job. Five months later, Eric was drafted by the U. S. Army and sent to serve back in Stuttgart, Germany.

On returning from Germany, Eric Carle went back to work for

the New York Times. He worked there for a couple of years and then became an art director for an advertising agency. It was here that Eric developed an ad where he experimented with a tissue paper collage. He designed a red lobster that was then seen by the educational author, Bill Martin. Bill then asked his art director to hire him to work on the illustrations for Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? This was the beginning of his work with children's books and it really felt good to him. He felt that these were the kind of books he would have liked to have had as a child. This feeling helped him to decide to do the book and it changed his life. He began to think about his own ideas for children's books. These ideas were only created for himself, for his own personal interest. He never really thought of publishing them.

Eric Carle met his publisher and fell into the world of children's book publishing quit by accident. He was once asked to create six illustrations for a cookbook. He became so interested in the project that he made thirty pictures instead. The editor who looked over his work was actually the editor over children's books. She was interested to see if Eric had any of his own ideas that she could look at. Eric did not trust his ability with English yet. He was unsure about his use of grammar and punctuation, so he brought in a book idea that he thought would be safe, called 1,2,3, to the Zoo.

This was an idea for a picture book, so Eric would not have to worry about using words. When the editor found out, she told him not to worry about his writing because she had a full staff to take care of that. She was interested in people with ideas. So Eric brought in "Willy the Worm."

"Willy the Worm" later became know as The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Eric's editor was bothered by the worm, so she discussed it with him and brought up the idea of using a caterpillar. Eric liked the idea of an ugly little hairy thing that grows into a very beautiful butterfly. So very quickly, Eric had two books. Without plans or really even trying, he became an author and illustrator of his own children's books. After working with Bill Martin and his new editor, he was turned on to children's books.

Eric Carle has a unique style that is easy to spot. He usually uses tissue paper to develop beautiful collages. He started out by using colored tissue paper. Later, he began to paint on the tissue paper to add texture. Today, Eric simply buys white tissue paper and paints it with what ever color or texture he wants. He uses acrylic paints for color. Eric uses different types of brushes, left over pieces of rug, splattered paint, etc., to develop different textures. He paints different colors and textures of tissue paper and then puts them away until he is ready to use them. He has accumulated

1,000's of sheets of painted tissue paper that are filed away according to color until he is ready to use them.

To develop a book from beginning to end usually takes Eric from two to three years. Books are not easy. He, like all of us, often gets stuck when working on a book. He will often struggle with it, put it away, get mad and/or talk to his editor about it. Sometimes he will just give up on an idea.

Eric Carle was married and had two children, Cirsten and Rolf. He was later divorced and has since remarried. You can find the initials of his children in the illustrations of many of his books. His daughter Cirsten also influenced his book, Papa, Please Get the Moon For Me. One day as Cirsten was looking at the moon, she asked her father, "Papa, please get the moon for me". This encouraged him to write the book for her. Of all of Eric's books, his favorite is Do You Want to Be My Friend. He believes and has found that friendship is very important to children.

Books To Get Started

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Summary

The Very Hungry Caterpillar is one of the first books written by Eric Carle. It is a story of a caterpillar's transformation from an egg to a beautiful butterfly. As the sun rose, the caterpillar came

out of the egg. As the weeks progressed, the very hungry caterpillar ate his way through many things. With each day, the caterpillar ate more and more. By the end of the week the caterpillar was very fat and ready to build his cocoon. Two weeks later the caterpillar ate his way out of the cocoon and emerged as a beautiful butterfly.

Annotation/Notes

Eric Carle's illustrations are big, bright, and bold. The pictures are unique collages developed from specially painted and prepared tissue paper. He uses punched out holes in the pages of the book to represent the holes eaten away by the caterpillar. He also uses a variety of different page sizes. Children are drawn to this unique style of illustration. The text is simple and predictable. It is a story of hope. It is the hope of a hairy little caterpillar who changes into a big beautiful butterfly. This story could be incorporated into a science lesson. It could also be used as the focus of a lesson for building personal and emotional character.

Papa, Please Get the Moon For Me

Summary

Papa, Please Get the Moon For Me is a story that developed out of an experience Eric had with his daughter, Cirsten. It is a story of a young girl who looked at the moon and wished she could play with it. She asked her Papa to please get the moon for her. Her Papa got a

long ladder and climbed to the moon but it was too big. The moon told him to wait and in time he would get smaller and then Papa could take him. When the moon reduced in size, Papa brought the moon down and the daughter played with the moon until the moon disappeared completely. Later, a sliver of the moon reappeared in the sky and then night by night it grew back to its regular full size.

Annotation/Notes

The illustrations are unique to Eric Carle. He believes that the transition into school is very difficult for young children so he tries to make his books more like toys than books. Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me has pages that stretch and extend beyond the normal bounds of most books. The pages stretch out horizontally to show the length of the ladder. As Papa goes to the moon, the pages extend vertically. To exaggerate the large moon, the pages pop up to increase the dimensions of the book. Children are fascinated with this book's style and enjoy reading Eric Carle's work. The text is simple and could be used to enhance a science or art lesson.

A House for Hermit Crab

Summary

Hermit Crab has a problem. He has grown out of his shell and needs to find a new one. When he finds one, he isn't very happy because it is so plain. This doesn't worry him. As he travels the

ocean floor, he finds new friends to join him and make their home on his shell. Each month, a new sea creature joins Hermit Crab and helps to make his shell beautiful. As the year passes, Hermit Crab makes a lot of new friends but he also continues to grow and soon out grows his shell and must find a new one. Hermit Crab does not want to leave his loyal friends, so he must first find a smaller hermit crab who will take over his beautiful shell and take care of his special friends, and he does. Hermit Crab soon found a new, plain shell and can't wait to begin to make new friends to share it with.

Annotation/Notes

This is a story about adjusting to growth and changes. Although Eric chose a crab to symbolize the character who experiences change, he really had young and growing children in mind as he wrote this book. Changes naturally occur in children's lives. Often the move from town to town, the change schools, or even the change from one grade to another can be frightening. The story was written to help children see that change is not bad. Children should not dread new experiences, but be excited about the new and exciting opportunities that the future experiences can bring.

The story also introduces children to the wonderful world of marine life. It can be a fun literature experience to compliment an ocean or marine life unit. Definitions of the ocean life that join

Hermit Crab's home are described in the back of the book. The illustrations are simple, bright, beautiful, and share the unique and well loved art work and style of Eric Carle. A class may enjoy experimenting with Eric Carle's artistic style. After studying his illustrations, the class may choose to experiment with paint and tissue paper and create their own collages.

Other Selected Titles by Eric Carle

Animals, Animals (Scholastic, 1989).
Brown Bear, Brown Bear (Henry Holt, 1967).
Do You Want to Be My Friend (HarperCollins, 1971).
Draw Me A Star (Philomel, 1992).
1,2,3 to the zoo (The Trumpet Club, 1968).
The Grouchy Ladybug (Scholastic, 1977).
A House For Hermit Crab (Picture Book Studio, 1987).
Papa, Please Get the Moon For Me (Picture Book Studio, 1986).
The Rooster Who Set Out To See The World (Scholastic, 1972).
The Secret Birthday Message (Trumpet Club, 1992).
The Tiny Seed (Picture Book Studio, 1970).
The Very Busy Spider (Philomel, 1984).
The Very Hungry Caterpillar (Philomel, 1969).
The Very Quiet Cricket (Philomel, 1990).

Scholastic Author Tapes offer a audio taped interview of Eric Carle
An excellent video tape is also offered by Philomel Books and
Scholastic, Inc. The video is called Eric Carle: Picture Writer and
can be obtained through a Scholastic Book Club Bonus point catalog.

Chris Van Allsburg

Biographical Highlights

Chris Van Allsburg was born on June 18, 1949, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His father ran a dairy. This was not the kind of dairy that raised the cows, but the part of a dairy that converted the milk into ice cream.

Chris has always had a love for art. As a child, this passion for art was sometimes stronger than his concern for his health. In elementary school, they had art twice a week. On one morning when he was feeling particularly feverish, he went to school anyway because it was art day. During art, the teacher noticed that he wasn't looking too good, so she took him into the hall to talk to him. Once there, Chris proceeded to throw up into another child's boots, that were waiting to be worn home. Although he was embarrassed, the teacher comfortingly took him to the office to call his mother.

Chris had another interesting experience with being sick and his love for art. When Chris was eight, he had developed a passion for collecting stamps. Once after three weeks of doing nothing but looking at stamps with his friend, Chris became very ill with the flu. While delirious with fever, Chris could picture the stamp of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The strange part about this experience was that he was also in the picture with the explorers and the Indian

guides. After this experience, Chris gave up stamp collecting and has never had much interest in it since.

His ability to draw helped him gain popularity as a child, but by fourth grade, peer pressure helped encourage him to put aside art for new activities. He began getting involved with things that boys were supposed to enjoy, like baseball and football. It was important to do the things that helped boys become good athletes. In high school, he took a few art classes, but it was not ever thought of as a serious career possibility. He thought that someday, he would become an attorney.

When Chris went to college, he was mistakenly accepted into the school of art, at the University of Michigan. He had not planned on this, nor had he prepared, but he was accepted through a bureaucratic oversight. In college, his love for art was rediscovered. His main focus of study was on sculpture. He only took drawing classes because they were required courses. Chris graduated from Michigan with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts (1972), and later received his master's degree in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design (1975). After college, Chris began his career as a successful sculptor. He began drawing in the evenings as a hobby. Chris's friend, a book illustrator, saw some of Chris's drawings and encouraged him to consider doing some illustrating.

After working up a story and some drawings, Chris's wife took his work around to publishers, who suggested he develop it more, which he did.

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi, Chris's first book, was published in 1979. He wasn't sure what to expect, but he figured if it didn't sell he would at least be able to buy up some of the copies and give them away for Christmas. To his delight, it sold quite well. In contrast to selling one of his sculptures, Chris liked knowing that the art in his books would be seen and experienced by many.

Chris Van Allsburg usually begins his books by developing the story first. Through the mental composition of the story, he begins to develop his illustrations. Chris's illustrations vary in perspective. He believes that making a book is a lot like making a movie. The illustrator is much like the director. It is his/her job to decide where the perspective will originate, and where the camera will be set. Point of view is very important to Chris. Camera angle and lighting add to the dramatic tone of his stories. It is interesting to imagine yourself in the place of the camera man and look for the perspective that Chris used in his illustrations.

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi is based on a little dog named Fritz. This little dog has become Chris Van Allsburg's signature element. He can be found in all of his books, in one form or another.

Sometimes you really have to look to find him, but it is fun to try. Chris has made a game out of this and has fun trying to find new ways to hide him.

Chris now lives in Providence, Rhode Island with his wife, Lisa, and daughter, Sophia. He teaches part time which helps to get him out of his studio. Teaching allows him to discover more about composition. By critiquing the work of students, Chris is forced to examine the composition of a picture. It has allowed him to look for the aspects that will give a good picture the added power it may need.

Books To Get Started

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi

Summary

Miss Hester is going to visit her cousin Eunice. Fritz, Hester's dog who had once bitten Eunice, was not invited. Alan Mitz was asked to stay with Fritz and give him his afternoon walk. Fritz liked to chew things, but Alan kept an eye on him until they both fell asleep. After a brief nap, Alan was awakened by a bite on the nose to remind him that it was time for Fritz's walk.

During the walk, Fritz and Alan passed the home of the retired magician, Abdul Gasazi. The sign on the gate said that absolutely no dogs were allowed. However, Fritz broke loose and headed for the

garden with Alan close behind. Soon after Alan lost Fritz, he finds Abdul Gasazi's house. Convinced that Fritz had been captured, Alan knocked on the door. Gasazi told Alan that he could have his dog, and led him to the back yard, to a flock of ducks. He pointed out the duck that he said was Fritz but refused to turn him back into a dog. The duck then flew off with Alan's hat. Alan was left to return to Miss Hester's without Fritz. After telling Miss Hester about his adventure, Fritz, the dog, walked out of the kitchen. Miss Hester and Fritz then walked onto the porch to watch Alan as he returned home, feeling kind of silly. Fritz, who was playing on the lawn, then returned to Miss Hester with Alan's hat in his mouth.

Annotation/Notes

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi was Chris Van Allsburg's first book. The pictures have been beautifully drawn with carbon pencil. Chris draws his illustrations from many different view points. The angles of perspective change from picture to picture. One drawing may be very close, another, looking down from the top or from a side angle. His use of perspective and shading make you feel like you are right there. From this book, Chris Van Allsburg found his signature character. The figure of Fritz was later used in all of Chris's books. Sometimes the image is not very obvious so you may really have to search his illustrations to find him.

Chris leaves the reader questioning and thinking at the end. Did Abdul change Fritz into the duck, or did Fritz run home and was everything else just a coincidence? The Garden of Abdul Gasazi was awarded as a Caldecott Honor Book , 1979.

The Polar Express

Summary

On a Christmas Eve long ago, a young boy lay listening for the sound of Santa's sleigh bells. Instead, he hears the sound of a train that stops in front of his home. He is invited to join the other passengers (children) to travel on the Polar Express. The train ends up at the North Pole, where the children all are invited to meet Santa Claus.

The young boy is invited to receive the first gift of Christmas. He is allowed to choose anything he wants. He asks Santa if he can have one of the bells from the reindeer's harness. As the children head home, the boy finds that he doesn't have the bell in his pocket anymore.

The next morning, the last present under the tree is the bell with a note from Santa. The boy finds that his parents are unable to hear the bell, but that children can hear it. The bell has a magic that can only be heard by those who truly believe.

Annotation/Notes

The Polar Express is the story of a young boy's Christmas dream. The detailed pictures and use of perspective add strength and realism to this work. The Polar Express is one of the few books that Chris has used color on. The colors are subtle but add a new dimension to Chris's art work. This book has become a Christmas classic. As with his other books, The Polar Express is filled with the mystery that keeps the reader thinking and wondering for a long time after experiencing it's beauty. Chris Van Allsburg said, "I thought I was writing about the train trip, but the story was actually about faith and the desire to believe in something" (Commire,1989). This book won the Caldecott Medal for 1986.

Other Selected Titles by Chris Van Allsburg

Ben's Dream (Houghton, Mifflin, 1982).
The Garden of Abdul Gasazi (Houghton Mifflin, 1979).
Jumanji (Houghton Mifflin, 1981).
Just a Dream (Houghton Mifflin, 1990).
The Mysteries of Harris Burdick (Houghton Mifflin, 1984).
The Polar Express (Houghton Mifflin, 1985).
The Stranger (Houghton Mifflin, 1986).
The Sweetest Fig (Houghton Mifflin, 1993).
Two Bad Ants (Houghton Mifflin, 1988).
The Widow's Broom (Houghton Mifflin, 1992).
The Wreck of the Zephyr (Houghton Mifflin,1983).
The Wretched Stone (Houghton Mifflin, 1991).
The Z was Zapped: a play in 26 acts (Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

Attachment One to Appendix

**Annotated Bibliography
of Selected Resources
For Author Studies**

Something About the Author

Commire, A. (Ed.). (1971-1994). Something about the author. (Vols. 1-76). Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co.

This is an on going reference series that deals with the lives and works of authors and illustrators of children's books. It is a cumulative index that can be found in major public and college libraries. Each year new volumes are added to the collection. The series focuses on a wide variety of author/illustrators and their works. It does not just highlight well known artist but includes a wide variety of popular artists, less known artists, and new up and coming writers and illustrators. The writers entered represent all genres of literature. These inclusions to the series lend it to a wider population of readers. Also, beginning with volume 57, cumulative indexes are included in every other odd volume. This is a major asset to users when searching out a particular author. Each entry is a comprehensive collection of material and information about the authors. Readers can learn both personal and professional information. The entries are categorized into a variety of sections, all with extensive information to support the author. This information can be a valuable resource for those interested in learning about the authors.

Each entry is highlighted with illustrations from the authors works. This adds interest to the reading, breaks up the facts, and

introduces the reader to the style of illustrations used. They can also be helpful in captivating the readers interest and facilitating in reminding the readers of piece they may have read before, but have forgotten.

The writing style is written for an audience of experienced readers, although anyone interested in children's literature can be fascinated by it. The information is very interesting, but is written in small print and semi-technical language. However, this is excellent information to inform a teacher about the authors so that they can share it with their children. The information gives a fairly complete overview of the author's life and career experiences. Most entries include an address to write to the author but it is best to write directly to the author's latest publisher, since addresses tend to change from time to time.

The information above is excellent for the beginning of any author study. The authors selected for this research can be found in this series. I would suggest that anyone interested in working with author studies begin with this resource. Tomie dePaola can be found in volume 59, Don and Audrey Wood in volume 50 and Chris Van Allsburg is entered in volume 53. At times, an author may be entered in more than one volume. It is always a good idea to check the cumulative index in the latest volume to make sure you are

covering all entries.

Children's Literature Review

Senick, G. J. (Ed.). (1976-1994). Children's literature review. (Vols. 1-32). Detroit, MI: Gale Research Co.

This is a cumulative literary reference series. Each volume highlights approximately twenty authors. The authors are chosen from a variety of different genres (fiction, non-fiction, picture books, poetry, etc.) and include international authors as well.

"Children's Literature Review" is a collection of excerpts from published critical reviews of an author or illustrators work. These entries highlight living artists who are still writing at the time of publication. Updates of previously highlighted artists are included from time to time.

Each entry begins with an author's commentary. This is an autobiographical account of the author's life and work. It is interesting to hear about the author in his own words. This is an excellent, primary source of information. The reader learns what the author feels is interesting and important about his life. A more personal understanding and knowledge of the author can be gained.

A variety of commentaries follow. These critical reviews may be about the author and his work as a whole or they may be aimed at a particular book. These are important in helping the reader understand the way others see this author and his work. How his

work is accepted by the outside community may be important in helping teachers make educational decisions about the usefulness of the material. The reviews are organized under the heading of the particular book they are reviewing. This adds to this reference series' ease of use.

Each entry includes a variety of illustrations, straight from the authors books. These add variety to the entry, by breaking up the pages of text. The pictures are interesting and help the reader become familiar with the authors work and style.

This reference material is better suited for teachers, librarians, and adult readers who have an interest in children's literature. The text varies because it is an accumulation of many different styles of writing. The organization makes it easy to follow and find information, but the print is small and the language can be technical. This is a great resource for teachers to gather information about an author that they may want to share with their class during discussions.

Information on the works and reviews of the authors chosen for this study are found in this series and can be an excellent support in developing author studies. For information on Tomie dePaola, refer to volume 24. Don and Audrey Wood can be found in volume 26.

An Author a Month: for Pennies

McElmeel, S. L. (1988). An author a month : for pennies. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited Inc.

This book is an informational reference book that was created to enhance classroom literature programs by introducing children to some of the people who write their books. It is designed to help teachers develop and introduce author materials and information into their literature programs. The book was written with the philosophy that as children learn about the authors, they will find reading more enjoyable and it will encourage them to read books by many authors. It included information on books and materials that can be collected by the students and teachers. The entries establish a structure for teachers to follow that can help teachers begin author studies, introduce new books to the class, and draw children to good literature.

The structure of this book is in the title "An Author a Month." It gives suggestions on how teachers can plan and set up the class for author studies. With this in mind, this valuable resource book contains materials for twelve popular picture book author/illustrators. Complete author studies have been developed for nine of these authors. This was planned to compliment the time schedule of the standard school year. The remaining three entries are simpler, less developed units of study that may be used during

months that are shortened because of holidays or unforeseen school business.

The introduction includes suggestions to help teachers understand and use author studies in their classrooms. The rationale for this type of study is well defined and convincing. It includes excellent ideas on how to begin setting up your curriculum, schedule, and classroom. It is very helpful for the teacher who is interested in starting author studies but does not know where to start.

Each author study includes extensive information to begin a unit. Each full entry includes four sections. This is a great beginning for successful studies, but hopefully not the end. With time, teachers can collect posters and various materials to enhance their book collections and visual material for the development of inviting displays. This can be a well organized and valid approach to beginning author studies.

There are two additional volumes of this book also available; An Author a Month for Nickels and An Author a Month for Dimes. These publications are all designed to be easy to use and therefore provide an excellent resource. Each author study follows this basic outline that is easy to follow:

Autographed photo: Includes a brief description of the author on the reverse side. These can be photocopied and be the

beginning of a visual display.

About the Author: Contain personal and biographical information about the authors life experiences. A collection of information and experiences that will help teachers and students become familiar with authors and their works.

Setting the Stage: To give teachers and librarians ideas and information on how to set up the environment for the study of an author. It gives suggestions on how to best use the information in this book. It informs teachers on interesting facts about an author's work so that the children can more easily make connections with the authors works.

Idea Cupboard: An accumulation of ideas that teachers may use to expand on the authors ideas and their works. It includes information and suggestions on when and how the author's books may be good to use. Any combination of these ideas and activities can enhance the effect of the author's books and study.

This section also contains book lists from other authors. These are books contain similar themes or ideas that can be use to enhance the works of the spotlighted author.

Book Club Audio Taped Interviews: Author Study Kits

The Trumpet Club and Scholastic Book Club have offered author study kits. Each kit includes an audio taped interview with the

author, a poster, and basic written information on selected authors. These are excellent resources that can be collected by using book club bonus points. I have included annotated samples of tapes from two of the authors used in this resource guide.

Veblin, C. (interviewer). (1990). The trumpet club. authors on tape: Don and Audrey Wood, Holmes, PA: The Trumpet Club.

Learners get a candid view of this author/illustrator team. By listening to the authors talk about themselves, you can gain much more than just factual information. You learn about the authors' personalities, their voices, and the way they interact with each other. This gives the listener a special view of the authors that can't be found in a book or an article. It is easier to understand what drives and motivates the authors in their work. This tape includes a musical version of one of their popular children's books, "The Napping House." This adds color to the total recording and helps to capture the attention of the audience.

Through the interview, we gain a warm and personal connection with the authors. They tell some of their literary and artistic secrets that give the reader something else to focus on and think about as they read and experience the authors works. The interviewees are fun, interesting, and captivate their audience throughout the tape. Children can use this information to make later reading experiences more exciting and enjoyable. Children may begin

looking through their books to confirm new facts they have learned.

This is an excellent tool to enhance an author study. The children can learn the song version of The Napping House and therefore, experience the book from a new and different learning mode. Use the tape to talk about what the children think the authors are like. Through this tape, children gain a stronger connection with the authors and their works.

Nicholson, G. (interviewer). (1989). The trumpet club author's on tape: Tomie dePaola. Holmes, PA: Trumpet Club.

This tape is one of a series of taped interviews of popular children's authors. This interview seems to be very informal. The author seems to be at ease which makes it easier and more fun for the audience. It is an informative experience where the audience not only learns about the author but develops an appreciation for the author as a person. Through hearing the author's voice, his laughter, and his stories, we come to really see the author for who he is and begin to feel as though we really know him.

The tape gives a descriptive, valid report of the author's personal and professional history, since the tape is a direct interview with the author. This tape is an excellent way to help children develop a connection with the author and come to know Tomie dePaola as friend.

This tape is an excellent way to learn about the author in a first person experience. The draw back to using a tape is that the children have little to focus on and can easily have their attention drawn away from the interview. It helps to talk about the author first and help the kids become familiar with some of the books the author has written. This sparks an excitement every time the author mentions a familiar book. Also, follow up by reading and rereading more of the books that were mentioned and discussed. Emphasize the important points that the author is making. Showing the book that the author is talking about at the time, can be helpful. Simple questioning after the tape has shown that children gain a great deal of information from these taped interviews.

The tape emphasizes the use of the writing process and can be used as an example to show the process in progress. It is important that children see that the writing process is a lifelong process and even the best authors and illustrators depend on it.

Attachment Two to Appendix

**Addresses:
Selected Publishers**

Addresses Selected Publishers

I am including addresses of some well known publishers of children's books. This list is a beginning and other addresses can be found in author's current hard bound editions. Addresses of Publishers may change. Current addresses can be found for these and other publishers in the current editions of Literary Market Place or Children's Books in Print.

Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

Attention Children's Books Publicity
1540 Broadway
New York, NY 10036-4094
Tel: (212) 354-6500
(800) 223-6834

Subsidiaries

Dell Publishing
Skylark
Starfire

Children's Press

A Division of Grolier, Inc.,
5440 N. Cumberland Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60656
Tel: (312) 693-0800
(800) 621-1115

Child's Play

310 West 47th Street
Apartment 3D
New York, NY 10036-3153
Tel: (212) 685-0838
(800) 472-0099

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Children's Book Division

525 B Street, Suite 1900
San Diego, CA 92101
Tel: (619) 231-6616
(800) 346-8648

HarperCollins Publishers Children's Books

Attention: Institutional Marketing
10 East 53rd Street
New York, NY 10022-5299
Tel: (212) 207-7000
(800) 328-3443 (Customer Service)

Henry Holt & Company, Inc.

115 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
Tel: (212) 886-9200
(800) 488-5233

Subsidiaries:

Books for Young Readers
Owl Paperback
Owlet Paperback Books for Young Readers

Houghton Mifflin Company

Marketing Dept. of Houghton Mifflin Children's Books
222 Berkeley Street
Boston, MA 02116-3764
Tel: (617) 351-5000

Little Brown & Company

1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
Tel: (212) 522-8700
(800) 343-9204

Macmillan Children's Book Group

Division of Macmillan Pub. Co.
866 Third Avenue
Thea floor
New York, NY 10022
Tel: (212) 702-2000
(800) 257-5755

Subsidiaries:

Aladdin
Antheneum Books for Children
Collier Young Adult
Macmillan Children's Books
Scribners Books for Young Readers

The Putnam & Grosset Group

200 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (212) 951-8700
(212) 951-8773 (Institutional Marketing)
(800) 631-8571

Subsidiaries:

G. P. Putnam's Sons
Coward-McCann
Grosset & Dunlop
Philomel
Plats & Musk

Random House, Books for Young Readers

201 East Thea Street
New York, NY 10022
Tel: (212) 940-7605
(800) 726-0600 (Customer Service)

Scholastic Inc.

555 Broadway
New York, NY 10012-3999
Tel: (212) 343-6100

Subsidiaries

Apple Paperbacks
Blue Ribbon Books
Blue Sky Press
Little Apple

Simon & Schuster:

Books for Young Readers

1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

William Morrow & Company

1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
Tel: (212) 261-6500
(800) 237-0657 (Customer Service)

Subsidiaries:

Mulberry Book
Quill Paperback

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